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DRUIDICAL REMAINS

AND

ANTIQUITIES OF THE ANCIENT BRITONS,

PRINCIPALLY

IN GLAMORGAN;

CONTAINING A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE SAME,

IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND, FRANCE, &c.;

WITH

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

ON THE

LEARNING, ORIGIN, AND SUPERSTITION OF THE DRUIDS—THE
DOWNFALL OF DRUIDISM AS A RELIGIOUS SYSTEM—AND THE
INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN;

BY J. ROBERTS, SWANSEA.

SWANSEA:

PRINTED BY E. GRIFFITHS, HIGH-STREET.

1842.

TO J. H. VIVIAN, ESQ., M.P., F.R.S., F.G.S., &c.

SIR,

KNOWING the deep interest you take, not only in all that pertains to our local antiquities, but also your solicitude for the general diffusion of useful knowledge ; and animated with the purest sentiments of admiration of your generous disposition, patriotic spirit, and readiness at all times in forwarding the humblest attempts to bring to light facts relative to the history of the Ancient Britons, from whom the illustrious house of VIVIAN is descended ; together with the obligations under which I am placed for the unmerited enrougement that I have experienced on this occasion—these, sir, induce me to do myself the honour of Dedicating to you this humble production ; being fully convinced, that it will owe its best recommendation to the countenance of one, whose enlightened mind, private worth, and eminent public services, have gained him the affectionate esteem of all who know him.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient and faithful servant,

J. ROBERTS.

Swansea, February, 1842.

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ERRATA.

- In page 51, line 16, for "*tombs*," read "*jams*."
 In page 55, line 21, for "*covering*," read "*convening*."
 In page 88, line 3, for "*yoars*," read "*years*."

PREFACE.

IN 1837, the Patron of the Swansea Cymreigyddion Society, our patriotic and enlightened countryman, W. Williams, Esq. of Aberpergwm, offered for competition, a prize for "The best Welsh Essay on Druidical Remains in Glamorgan," which was awarded to the writer of the following pages, at the Anniversary of the Society in the year 1838.

It occurred to the Author, that having received this unexpected mark of approbation, an English translation of it, somewhat amplified, and accompanied by explanatory and illustrative notes and observations, with brief quotations from authorities not easily accessible, might, not only be favourably received by the public, but tend to disseminate among his countrymen some useful information relative to the civil and religious history of our forefathers in the ages of antiquity. In this opinion, he has been supported by many of his friends. The present little work, therefore, having originated in the Prize Essay alluded to, and having received all the improvement and illustration within the scope of the Author's opportunities and industry, is now submitted to the public, resting solely on the plea of utility in deprecating the criticism its defects will awaken.

Besides a description of local relics, it will be found to take a general view of the subject of Druidical Remains—of the learning of the Druids—the origin, &c. of Druidism, and its downfall as a religious system—the introduction of Christianity into Britain, with some thoughts on its excellence. Wherever the Author has ventured to express his judgment on points connected with the mental qualities and attainments of the Druids, he trusts that it has been done with moderation and impartiality.

It will be understood, that the limits of this work obliged the Author to be very brief in his remarks. It will be observed also, that the Author refers, principally, to the Religious Function of the Druids, and not to the Bardic; the upholding of which, in processions, costumes, &c. appear to him fully as absurd, as if a portion of the Christian community were to assume the garb of the ancient monks, or brahmins of India.

In concluding, he begs to express his sincere thanks to those Gentlemen who have allowed him to peruse their valuable collection of books; and also to acknowledge the kind assistance he has received from Mr. J. Lewis, the compositor.

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DRUIDICAL REMAINS IN GLAMORGAN.

THIS subject, probably, may be accounted by some persons as unprofitable, and scarcely worthy of notice. But, I think, it will appear evident to every considerate mind, that such notions are founded upon prejudice, and a deficiency of interest for national and scientific enquiry. By considering it closely, it invites the attention, not only of the antiquarian and patriot, but of all lovers of truth. For in those speaking monuments of antiquity, which are still scattered over the land, we recognize memorials of the ancient superstition of Britain, as well as of all those known and acknowledged features of the ancient Celtic worship; to which frequent references are made in the Triads, the old records of the Welsh, and in the traditions of the country.

The *Celtae* are supposed to have been the same people as the Gomerii, only under another name. This name was more particularly given to the Gauls, that inhabited that part on the continent called Gallia Celtica; situate between the rivers Sequana and Garumna, modernly called La Seine and La Garonne. They seem to have received the appellation of *Celtae* from Celtus, the son of Hercules.—*Lempriere's Classic. Dict.*

Probably, this name is from *cel* or *celv*, art or mystery. *Celi*—the mysterious or secret one: an epithet for the Supreme Being in the Welsh language—

Gwelir—

Duw ei Cheli fydd ei Chilydd.

It is seen, God the mysterious one was her protector.—*Dr. Owen Pugh.*

This word is common to the language, and there is every reason to suppose, that the name of the *Celtae* refers to the mysteries of their religion.

When we glance over and view Glamorgan, or *Gwlad-Morgan*, we evidently perceive various Druidical remains still extant, and not wholly devoured by the corroding tooth of time. They are also to be seen, in various parts of Europe, as fragments that are left, and as monuments that belonged to the great nation or tribe of the Gomerii* and the Galli of the primitive ages, whom the ancient historians so often mention.

* It is very probable, that the first is from Gomer, the son of Japheth; and the last signifies—the *powers*, or the *mighty*. It is thought that this great nation took the appellation of *Galli* to denote its power, when in its greatness and warlike glory. This is not improbable when we consider their power in ancient days; and the signification of the word in the Welsh Language, even to the present day, is *gallu*, or power.—See *Celtic Researches*, and *Pezron's Antiquity of Nations*.

But to commence with Druidical remains in Glamorganshire, which is the principal object, I shall, in the first place, notice and make a few observations on the name of those learned and religious officers of antiquity, who were so greatly famed and ranked so high in our land, and in various parts of Europe; viz., the Druids, *Derwyddon*, who were the greatest and most learned men of this Island, and of Gaul, and supposed to be much like the Magi of Persia.

Historians generally say, that the name of *Derwydd*, or Druid, is derived from the *derw*, or the oak, because it was their practice to worship under it. From this derivation I beg to differ in part, but with due respect and submission to the superior minds, sterling talents, and extensive learning of those great men who have given it this etymology. Judging for myself, I may be allowed to state, that it is very probable the tree *derw*, or *derwen*, had its name from the priests and high priests of the then national religion of the Gomerii, who were named *Derwydd-on*; thence *pren derwydd*, or Druid's tree, because they honoured this tree before every other, in consequence of its extensive and excellent shade. But in process of time, when

Druidism became corrupted, vain and superstitious sentiments were cherished of the tree; and the *uchelfar*, or misletoe, which is a plant or sprout that shoots out from its branches, and bears a kind of fruit at certain seasons, was greatly venerated. It is not generally upon oak trees, but it is to be found. In the corrupt and depraved state of Druidism, whilst superstition had its sway, when it was found, the Druids, Arch-Druids, and the people collected in vast numbers and with great solemnity around the tree. The Arch-Druid then ascended the oak, and cut the misletoe with a *cryman aur*, or golden hook, while the Druids beneath caught it falling in their sheets of white linen, and the whole multitude united to shout for joy, which made the valleys ring.

I now come to the derivation of the name of those ancient priests and public instructors of the nation, *Derwyddon*, or Druids. From the Welsh and English Dictionary of the learned Dr. Owen Pugh, I am led to conclude, that the word *Derwydd* is a compound from *da ar gwydd*; *da* good, *ar* above, highest, or chief, *gwydd*, knowledge, &c., *gwyddon*, men of knowledge, philosophers; thus *Derwydd* singular, *Derwyddon* plural—the good, highest, or chief instructor in knowledge. Hence it will appear, that this was, and is a very important word to designate the persons who were considered by the nation of such high interest, and standing among them as the most learned, wise, and good; to whom they entrusted their children for instruction, moral and religious; and who were their chief judges, counsellors, and advisers in peace and war, from whose judgement there was no appeal.—See *Davies's Mythology, and Borlase's Antiquities*.

This leads me back to the first age after the deluge, to the account given, in scripture, of Noah, the father of the new world. If we infer from what is recorded of him by Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, in Genesis, &c., and the noble specimen of art and

science, that we find in the construction of the ark, which has been the ground work and moving cause of the wonderful inventions of succeeding ages, I am inclined to believe, that the principle of Druidism originated with Noah, and descended from him to Gomer, the father of the old Gomerii, or Cymry of the present day; and that their religion, while in its pristine state, was good. But alas! it is evident, that they degenerated very early from the patriarchal religion. The words of the Apostle, therefore, are equally as applicable to the Druids as to others—"Being wise, they became fools."

There is a remarkable coincidence between the British Triads, *Tríoedd Ynys Prydain*, viz., the ancient writings of the Welsh, and the account given by the inspired penman of Noah and the deluge. In the Triads we find, amongst others, the following:—"One of the three awful events of the Isle of Prydain, the breaking out of the lake of streams, and all the lands becoming inundated, so that all the people were drowned, except *Dwyvan* and *Dwyvach*, who escaped in a bare ship, and from whom the Island of Prydain was re peopled." "One of the three principal works of the Island of Prydain, the ship of *Nefydd*, *Naf*, *Neifion*, that brought in it a male and female of all living, when the lake of *Llion* broke forth."—See *Dr. Owen Pugh's Dict. under Llion*.

This coincidence respecting the deluge, is worthy of notice and investigation. It tends to corroborate the account given, in the volume of inspiration, of that awful event that overwhelmed the human race (excepting eight persons); wherein we see the dread consequences of infidelity and disobedience. The remarkable account of the deluge is not peculiar to the records of the Gomerian Druids. The Greeks, Mussulmans, Chinese, Hindoos, and Americans have traditions of the deluge; but relate them after their own manner. Josephus cites Borosus, who, on the testimony of ancient documents, describes the deluge, and also gives the history of Noah and the ark; to which, very probably, the *cistfaen*, stone chest or ark, and *muenarch*, stone ark of the Druids, alluded.—To this, Mr. Davies subscribes.

Abydenus and Alexander Polyhistor relate nearly the same of a deluge. Lucian, in his book *De Dea Syria*, says, "That mankind having given up themselves to vices, the earth was drowned by a deluge, so that none but Deucalion remained upon it; he and his family having taken refuge in a vessel." Apollodorus, Ovid, and many others have discoursed on Deucalion's deluge; but have intermixed many circumstances, which agree only with that of Noah.

On these various traditions, as well as on the commemorative emblems of this event, preserved by the Egyptians, Hindoos, Druids, Greeks, Persians, Phœnicians, and many others, Mr. Taylor has collected a mass of information, not only respecting the Deluge, but also shewing that traces of the patriarchal religion are to be found among others nations, as well as the ancient Druids.

Calmet has given several specimens of the traditions of the deluge and the ark, extracted from various sources. One in particular, which is too remarkable to be overlooked, is a medal preserved in the cabinet of the King of France; and having been particularly scrutinized by the late Abbe of Barthelemy, at the desire of Dr. Combe—was, by that able antiquary, pronounced authentic. It bears an history in two parts; representing first, two figures inclosed in an ark or chest. On the side are letters; but only one intelligible—N, with another supposed to be Ω. On the top is a dove. In front, the same two figures are represented as coming out of the ark, departing from their late residence. Hovering over them, is the dove with a sprig in its bill.—(Double histories are common on medals.)—These figures imply their situation, and clearly commemorate an escape from the dangers of water, by means of a floating vessel.

Mr. Taylor also has produced several specimens, from a series of pictures in the antiquities of Herculaneum, commemorative of the same event; as well as the *cista mystica*, the memorial of the ark. "It is possible," says the same learned author, "that the reader may not at first perceive the propriety of attaching so great importance to the history of Noah's deliverance, and its commemoration." Thence he proceeds to justify his laborious investigation. Again he observes, "The outcry of a certain class of readers against revelation, has long been, Bring us facts, which all the world agree in—facts admitted, established by unbiassed evidence, &c." If, in answer to this, we adduce proof that the Christian dispensation is from above; we are reminded how few of mankind receive it. To establish the assertion, therefore, that Deity has condescended to make known his intentions to man, he invites such to investigate the instance of Noah. "Was the deluge," he asks, "a real occurrence?—All mankind acknowledge it. Wherefore, tradition has been maintained, wherever commemorative rites have been instituted. What has been their subject? The deluge; deliverance from destruction by a flood. The savage and the sage agree in this. North and South, East and West, relate the danger of their great ancestor, and his escape from overwhelming waters. But he was saved; and how? By personal exertion? By long supported swimming? By concealment in the highest mountains?—No; but by enclosure in a large floating edifice of his own construction for this particular purpose. But this labour was long: this was not the work of a day—he must have foreknown so astonishing an event a considerable time previous to its actual occurrence. Whence did he receive this foreknowledge? Did the earth inform him that at twenty, forty years' distance, it would disgorge a flood? Surely not. Whence then had Noah his foreknowledge? Did he begin to build when the first showers descended? This was too late. Had he never seen rain, what could induce him to provide against it? Why this year more than last year?—These enquiries are direct: we cannot flinch from the fact. Erase it from the Mosaic records—still it is recorded in Greece, in Egypt, in India, and in Britain—it is registered in the very *sacra* of the pagan world. Go, infidel, turn to the right hand or to the left—take your choice of difficulties—disparage all mankind as fools, as willing dupes to superstitious commemorations; as leagued throughout the world to delude themselves, in order to impugn your wisdom, your just thinking, your love of truth, your unbiassed integrity; or allow that this truth, this fact, at least this one fact, is established by testimony abundantly sufficient; but remember, that if it be established by testimony, it implies—it proves a communication from God to man. Who could inform Noah, but the Almighty? Why did not the Patriarch provide against fire? Why against a deluge or water? Away with subterfuge; say, frankly, this was indeed the dictation of Deity—say, only He who made the world could predict the time, the means—the causes of this devastation by a deluge—

use your own language; but permit a believer to adopt language already recorded. *By faith, Noah being warned of God of things never seen as yet, in pious fear prepared the ark to the saving of his family, by which he condemned the world."*

It is very probable, that the religion of the Patriarch continued pure for some time after his death; but as his posterity, after the confusion of language, dispersed, they became corrupt and superstitious; one tribe adding some vain ceremonies, and others varying as their depraved hearts inclined them.

It is natural to suppose, that every principal tribe, nation, or people, derived their religious principles from the same fountain; as every nation had, in all ages, its religious systems, although they varied in some things; viz., practising their various rites and superstitious ceremonies, but yet, all having some remains left of the system taught by the progenitor of the human race, which system he undoubtedly taught his posterity as long as he lived. Therefore, it is inferred, that this system remained purest amongst the descendants of Gomer.

I do not refer to the revelation and religious system that the Almighty was pleased to deliver and command to Abraham and Moses, but the system taught and practised by Noah; between which and Druidism, we find great similarity, such as a belief in the Supreme Being. They erected altars—worshipped with the profoundest reverence—believed in the immortality of the soul—practised morality, and insisted on a life of purity, as we learn from Taliesin, and Aneirin, celebrated Bards of the fifth and sixth centuries. The quotation also of *Carnhuanawc*, in his history of Wales, from Pomponius Mela of the time of Claudius, speaking of the Druids on the Continent, he says, "That one portion of their doctrines was divulged; viz., to excel in war—that the soul was immortal—and that there is another state of existence for them." The ancient religion of Britain, therefore, though its principles were derived from a pure fountain,

yet, in the course of time, (according to Cæsar, Pliny, and others,) it became a powerful system of superstition.

“How to account,” says the Rev. Mr. James, “for this remarkable coincidence, has greatly puzzled the historian and the philosopher. Such resemblances are only the remains of what was once common to the whole human race. They are part of the literary and religious stores of the ante and post-deluvian world, transmitted by the patriarchs Noah and his children to their posterity, and conveyed by all the families of the dispersion to those countries in which their children have, by custom and tradition, retained them ever since, though not entirely free from corruption.

The primitive religion conveyed in this manner from Shinar to all parts of the habitable globe, assumed, almost in every country, a different name in consequence of the difference of language that everywhere prevailed. Among the ancient Hindoos it was called Brachmanism, and its ministers, Brachmans—among the Chaldeans, Wisdom, and its ministers, Wise Men; among the Persians, Magism, and its ministers, Magi; among the Greeks, Priesthood, and its ministers, Priests; among the Gauls and Ancient Britons, Druidism, and its ministers, Druids;—All synonymous terms implying Wisdom, and Wise Men, Priesthood, and Priests.”

CROMLECHAU, OR ALTARS.

I shall now notice the *Cromlechau*, or huge altars, upon which, it is supposed, the Druids sacrificed their victims. *Crom-llech* singular, *Cromllechau* plural; from *crum*, *crymu*, bending, bowing, and *llech*, a flat stone. It is most probable, that they were given this appellation from the posture of the wor-

shippers bowing before the altar. *Cromlechau* are generally considered to have been Druidical altars, and the most common of all Celtic monuments that are to be found, not only in many parts of Europe, but also in Asia ; and exhibit, in the strength and simplicity of the materials, the true character of the workmanship of antiquity.

In Sir Richard Hoare's history of Wiltshire, there are representations given of such stones in Malabar, exactly similar to those *Cromlechau* of the British Isles. Also, in Maundrell's travels, there is an account of a monument of the same description upon the Syrian Coast.

There are several of those huge altars in different parts of Britain ; such as those at Rolldrich, in Oxfordshire—Carnbre, in Cornwall—Kits Cotty House, in Kent—the large one called *Y Gromlech*, in the parish of Nevern, Pembrokeshire ; which are the most notable, with those of Glamorgan.

In Gŵyr, or Gower, (now in the County of Glamorgan,) upon an high hill called Cefn Bryn, there is at present a large and notable *Cromlech*, upwards of twenty tons weight, although there have been, from time to time, many pieces broken off for mill-stones.—*See Camden*. This huge stone stands on others of less magnitude, an astonishment to all who behold it, and there is every probability to suppose, that there was a Druidical temple or institution in the neighbourhood to which the *Cromlech* belonged. The above stone is called, by the English inhabitants, "King Arthur's Stone;" and they relate many superstitious traditions of that heroic king. It has been called by that name for ages, from the supposition that he patronized the institution connected with it ; of which I shall speak again.

This is the *Maencetti*, or Ketti Stone, mentioned in the British Triads, as noticed by the learned *Carnhuanawc*, who says, that he does not know what it means. Although it may appear presumptuous in me to attempt an explanation of it, yet, I

beg to offer the following remark on the word. Doubtless, there were buildings belonging to the Druidical institutions, when in their flourishing state, though not so magnificent as modern edifices, where they studied and instructed according to the rites and principles of Druidism. We are told by Julius Cæsar, "that noblemen sent their sons over from Gaul to the Island of Britain, to study under the Druids, and that many continued for twenty years in their studies, &c.;" consequently, there must have been, necessarily, suitable public buildings upon a scale convenient for the institution. Now it appears probable that this *Cromlech* was called *Maenketti*, from *maen*, a stone, *ced*, a gift, and *tý*, a house; and that the Druidical edifices were called *Cedtai*, or *Kettai* plural, and *Ketty* singular. The signification of *ced*, ket, is a gift, *ketinin*, a precious gift, and *teyrnget*, the king's tax, tribute, or due; *talw ced*, to pay tax, or tribute, &c.—See Dr. O. Pugh's Dict.

Thus it appears, if this be correct, that *Maenketti* means the stone, or altar, of the benefice of the Druidical institution; and there is every probability that such a place once existed in the vicinity of *Cefn-bryn*. There is a village, at a short distance, still retaining the name of Ketti, which, I think, belonged to this altar, viz., Ketty, or Quetty Green. There are several other localities in the neighbourhood, that seem to imply that they are derived from their connexion with the same; such as *Llan-rhyd-huan*, *Kil-hu-buan*. Also, Sketty, near Swansea, may be of the same derivation, from Isketty, or Ysketty. This district, probably, belonged in past ages to the Ketty in Gower. If derivable from Isketty, it gives us the following sense, viz., - Underketty, or Lowerketty, belonging to the Ketty; if Ysketty, it means separated from the Ketty. It may have been in ancient times land that belonged to the Ketty; but as Druidism declined and Christianity extended, its lands were separated from it,

or sold. Such we find was the case many centuries afterwards as it respected Popery in this country. Lands that were to support Abbeys, Nunneries, &c. were separated from them ; consequently, those places and institutions, that once flourished in great splendour, fell and disappeared. For example, one instance of the great change that has taken place in human affairs, in a very short time, is Neath Abbey. It obtained a royal charter as an University ; was celebrated in song by the Bard Lewis Morganwg ; and afforded a safe retreat to one of the Kings of England. So late as the close of the fifteenth century, this magnificent edifice was in a very flourishing state ; but now, only its ruins are to be seen, which denote its former grandeur ; and, ere long, there will be only the name left as a monument to succeeding ages to indicate that there was such a place.

The learned author of the *Celtic Researches* is of opinion, that such rude and massy structures as the *Cromlechau*, &c., were erected in memory of the Ark ; from an allusion made to them in one of the Triads, under the name of *Maen-arch*, the stone ark, and *Kistfaen*, stone chest or ark ; and adds, "We are told in the Triads, that the three mighty labours of the Island of Britain, were lifting the stone of *Ketti*, building the work of Emrys, and piling up the Mount of the Assemblies."

"The work of Emrys implies the sacred circles, such as Stonhenge, which is known by that name ; the *Maen Ambres* in Cornwall ; *Dinas Emrys* in Snowden ; and other Petrai Ambrosial. And in Silbury-hill, we may contemplate the Mount of Assemblies : but what third kind of British monuments is there which displays the effect of great labour in lifting a stone, unless it be the *Cromlech* ?"

Mr. Davies also gives the following explanation of *Maen-ketti* :—" *Ketti* is a derivative of *Ket*, and this must have implied ark or chest ; for we still retain its diminutive form *Keten* to denote a small chest, or cabinet. Wherefore, *Maen-ketti* is the stone ark ; and it could have been no other than the ponderous covering of that cell which represented the ark."

This is certainly very plausible, and appears to be the best explanation of the two, of *Maen-ketti* ; in addition to which I have to remark, that the Welsh word *arch*, denotes a coffin and ark ; *arch Noah*, Noah's ark. The same remains we find in the name of Lanark ; which means, I have no doubt, *Llan-arch*, the Druid place of meeting, dedicated to the ark.

As it respects the remains of antiquity, it is often

the case that some interesting facts are couched in a single word; and if there is any importance to be attached to such words, I presume that the names of several places in Sketty, demand the attention of the antiquarian. They convey to the reflective mind, many ideas that tend to corroborate the supposition, that Sketty was connected with the Druidical institution; although every vestige of its ruins are buried in the shades of past ages, so that there remains only as much as may be found in the names of places, which lead us back through many centuries to reflect upon the scenes of by-gone days.

Some of the places referred to are *Gellidywyll*, the dark, or gloomy grove; *Hendrefoelan*, the old town, or dwelling of the *bare llan*: *Hendref*, the old town, or dwelling, forms the names of many old mansions, such as *Hendref Urien*, *Hendref Gadog*. And also *Craig y Bwldan*; the latter name is very remarkable: it means the round fire-rock—*craig*, rock, *bwl*, rotundity, a round hollow body; and *tân*, fire. I can scarcely venture a conjecture upon the name of this place; but it evidently means the above, whatever it may refer to. If it is the same as *Beldân*, or *Beltân*, it will appear to be the *Beltân* rock, or the rock of Bel's fire. "The worship of Bel, Belus, or Belinus," says Calmet, "was general throughout the British Islands." Moore also, in his history of Ireland, says the same of that country. His words are, "The sun was, under the name of Baal, or Bel, the chief deity of the Irish." He has likewise produced the names of several places called after Baal, such as *Beltinne*, or *Bel's fire*, &c.

We are given the same account of Ireland, Scotland, &c. by Dr. Keating and Dr. Macpherson. Mr. Pennant, and others also shew, that it was the same in England and Wales. This, I think, is very probable, particularly when the following passage, from the pen of Dr. O. Pugh, is considered:

“ From Roman-British altars dedicated to Mars, we find he was called Bel ; for on one that was found in the north of England, occurs the epithet *Bel, y duw Cadr*, or Mars, the puissant god.”

The language used in the above epithet sufficiently proves, that the Gomerians, or Ancient Britons, paid the same respect to this false deity as other nations did. The names of places (those significant memorials by which a whole history is, sometimes, conveyed in a single word) retain vestiges of the ancient superstition of the land, and prove facts that we dare not deny. How far the ancient Druids were connected with Bel, I do not take on myself to solve ; as I am aware of the doubts entertained upon the question by some very learned men. But it is evident, that the heathen worship of the Phenicians was introduced into the British Isles long before the Roman invasion ; therefore, the aforesaid altar and epithet must refer to much remoter times.

The next that comes under my notice is Marcross, in the vale of Glamorgan. In this place there is a *Cromlech* and *Carneddau*, or heaps of huge stones ; and an ancient place in ruins, called *Hen Lan*. According to the appearance of those relics, and the traditions among the inhabitants, there has been a Druidical temple in the place, but of which there is no historical account ; although Lantwit Major, *Llanylltid Fawr*, with its ancient seminary, is recorded in history as a place of great renown for learning and religion ; where, as far back as the fifth century, *Taliesin*, the chief Bard of the west, and *Catwg Ddoeth*, Wise Catwg, studied ; whose writings are rich specimens of the ancient literature of the *Cymry*, and have been preserved from the destruction and havock that was made upon the Bards and their writings in past ages.

Some distance from this place, in the parish of *Llanbedryfro*, Peterstone, there are several *Cromlechau* ; and one of them is considered to be the

largest in Glamorgan. As I have not seen them, I will not attempt a description of them. However, as there are many *Cromlech*au, or Druidical altars, in the neighbourhood, it is very likely that a temple has been there. The name also of the magnificent mansion close by, called *Hensol*, built by Lord Chancellor Talbot in 1720, inclines me to think, that there were some ancient buildings there before; or else it would not have had this name. It is a Welsh word from *hen*, old, *sol*, foundation, or portion of ground—the old foundation. Or it may be from *Hen Sol-le*, the old place of the sun; a compound of Welsh and Latin. It is evident that the word was commonly used by the Britons, to denote the sun, after they became subject to the Romans. As a proof of this, I need no more than refer to the name of the first day of the week, *Dydd Sul*, or *Sol*, viz., Sunday. But it was called, after the deities of the Romans were introduced, *Dydd Duw Sul*, or the god Sol's day. Therefore, I am of opinion, that the old place where *Hensol* now stands, was a temple dedicated to the sun.

With respect to the names of the days of the week, it is a matter of astonishment, that they are called, even to the present day, after the false gods of the ancients. Would it not be better to call them as they are denominated in the Book of books, viz., the Lord's day, or the first day, &c.? The English also in this respect continue to wear the same badge as the *Cymry*, by calling the days of the week after the false deities of their forefathers; viz., Sunday and Monday, &c. after the sun and moon. It is evident that they were dedicated to the false deities both among the Welsh and English, as the names prove; and which continue to the present age, as standing monuments of the superstition that once prevailed in the land.

The names of days, I think, cannot be considered strictly Druidical, but rather Roman remains; for it is well known that the Romans, who were pagan

idolaters of the first rank, introduced their mode of worship into Britain at an early period ; and it is stated upon undoubted authority, that Rome at one time swarmed with false gods, to the almost incredible number of 30,000 ! Therefore, it must be perceived that the Ancient Britons became corrupted still worse than when they were devoted to Druidic superstition, and contracted that inveterate moral malady of the human mind—Idolatry, from which no nation has been wholly exempt ; and it is an awful fact, that they also fell into the same pit of guilt and depravity as the Romans, Grecians, Saxons, and other nations of the world.

MAENGYLCHOEDD, OR STONE CIRCLES.

There is now in the parish of Llangyfelach, one of those circles, called *Carnllechart* ; consisting of a number of large flat stones standing upright, about eighteen yards in diameter, with an entrance or door-way : in the centre there is a *Kistfaen*, or stone chest, and a flat stone as a cover over it. This, according to some writers, was a Druidical altar ; and it is very probable that it was the grave of some great man or warrior, or an ancient burying-place in connexion with the Druids, as it has something of Druidical remains about it. It was at one time a place of great note, it is evident ; as we infer from its name, which is intended to distinguish it from other *Carns*, or *Cernydd*, as well as the number of large flat stones of which it is composed, which must have cost some considerable labour and expense in erecting.

The word *Carn* means a prominence, a heap ; also a heap of stones, the same as *Carnedd* : the ancient graves having such heaps on them, were called *Cernydd*. Hence the names of places, *Carn Fadryn*, *Carn Bre*, &c.

The *Carneddau*, and the tumuli of earth, were the common monuments that the Ancient Britons erected in honour of their great men. These modes of interment continued in use many ages after the introduction of Christianity; but when the custom of burying in churches became general, the former ways were not only disused, but condemned, as fit only for criminals. When the *Carnedd* was considered as the honourable tomb of the warrior, every passenger threw his additional stone, out of reverence to his memory. When this heap came to be disgraced, by being the mark where the guilty was laid, the custom for every one that passed by to fling a stone still continued, but now as a token of detestation.—*See Dr. O. Pugh's Dict.*

Carnllechart means the heap of flat stones. At some distance on the hill, there are remains of ancient encampments, in a line to Careg Cennen Castle. One is called *Pentwrclawdd*, and the other *Pentwr Castell*.

It is an evident fact, that those *Cernydd* were connected with the Druids in ancient days; and it is abundantly proved by Dr. Borlase, upon the subject of "Carnbre in Cornwall." He states, that there was upon that remarkable hill, not only a Druidical grove and temple, but also a place of interment; and likewise that the *Carn loskys*, in the same County, has been a Druidical place of sacrifice, and means the *Carn of burnings*. Such places, though frequently appropriated to the various purposes first mentioned, were in their original destination, it is plain, tombs such as are to be found in every region of the habitable world, and preceded, as monuments of the dead, even the ancient pyramids.

After comparing the primeval Celtic mound with the pyramidal heaps of the East, Clarke says, "In fact the Scythian Mound, the Tartar Tête, the Teutonic Barrow, and the Celtic Cairn, do all of them preserve a monumental form which was more anciently in use than the pyramid, because it is less artificial: and a proof of its alleged antiquity may be deduced from the mere circumstances of its association with the pyramids of Egypt, even if the testimony of Herodotus were less explicit as to the remote period of its existence among the northern nations."—*Travels, Vol. 5.*

In the travels of Professor Pallas, may be found an account of the immense variety of these sepulchral heaps, some of earth, some of stones ; which he saw in traversing the regions inhabited by the Cossack, Tartar, and Mongul tribes. Moore, in his history of Ireland, says, "Appollo evidently derived his title Carneus, from *Carn* ; the term in Celtic for those tumuli."

We may, therefore, from such strong resemblances between primeval and nearly patriarchal customs in the East, and those aboriginal works of Ireland and Britain in the West, naturally infer, that these sepulchral Carns are, almost without exception, the works of the first race of settlers in these countries.—*King's Munimenta Antiqua*.

There are also the remains of one of those circles on Drumau Hill, not far from Neath Abbey. Several large flag stones are also to be found standing as monuments in various parts of the County ; such as the boundary stone of Fitzhamon, between Kenfig and Margam ; the *Maenllythyrog*, or lettered stone, on Margam Hill ; and the stone with inscription on it found near Pyle, and now in the Royal Institution of South Wales. These cannot be classed with Druidical remains, although they appear to be of great antiquity.

MAENCHWYF, OR ROCKING STONE.

There is such a stone now to be seen upon the hill near Newbridge, in this County. It stands upon another that is in the earth, and is several tons weight. I was informed by a person who was brought up in the neighbourhood, that a few years back it was so nicely poised upon its pivot, that a child could easily move it.

But this is only a toy in comparison to the gigantic rocking-stone of Cornwall, and the wonderful Logan stone in the same County, the last of which is

computed to be 750 tons weight!! and stands several feet above the ground, resting upon the points of two huge stones.

Those stones are considered to have been erected by the Ancient Druids; but for what purposes is doubtful. I infer from the Cornish name of the last-mentioned stone, viz. Logan, that it is the same as the *Maenllog*, or *Llogvaen*, of the Welsh; only that the Cornish Britons drop the letter *v*, and call it Logan, which is an abbreviation of *Llogva'n*.

Thus, I presume, that the mystery of this word, Logan, as noticed by Borlase, is unravelled, and that the name of this huge stone means the *Llogva'n* of the Ancient Britons. The *Maenchwyv* means the rocking-stone, or moving-stone; and *Llogva'n*, the stone of covenant. Thus the first word describes the position of the stone, and the last tends to explain the design of it, and shews that both words were used to denote the same object. However, it is evident that we have an incontestible proof in those remains, that the Ancient Britons were possessed of science, and great skill in using mechanical powers.

"Those monuments," says Mr. Moore, "are known by the name of rocking-stones, and found in Ireland as well as in Cornwall and Wales, and appear in some respects to resemble that sort of natural or artificial wonder, which the Phœnicians held sacred, under the name of *Bætyli*, or animated stones. These they declare to have been fabricated by the god *Ouranos*, or Heaven, the deity worshipped by the Samothracians; and also under the title of *Samhin*, or heaven, by the Irish. That these stones (which moved, it is said, as if stirred by a demon) formed part of the idolatrous ceremonies of the East, may be concluded from the mention of them by some ancient writers, as having been seen at that great seat of Sun-worship, *Heliopolis*, or the ancient *Balbec*. In some instances it would appear that the *Bætyli* were so far unlike the mobile monuments of the Druids, that they were but small and portable stones, worn by the religious as amulets. There were, also, some answering exactly to the description of the Druidical rocking-stones, as appears from the account given in *Ptolomy Hephaeston*, an author cited by *Photius*, of a vast *Gigionian* stone, as he calls it, which stood on the shores of the ocean, and which, though it might be stirred by the stalk of an asphedol, no human force could remove." It is rather remarkable too, that as we learn from a passage of *Apollonius Rhodius*,—

"In Tenos, by the blue waves compass'd round,
High o'er the slain he heap'd the funeral mound;
Then rear'd two stones, to mark that sacred ground!
One pois'd so light that (as the mariner sees
With wondering gaze) it stirs at every breeze!"

I have made free in giving this extract from so learned a gentleman, as he has quoted a vast number of the most learned upon the subject, and as it tends to give a striking description of the rocking-stone in this country; particularly the huge stone of Cornwall, which may be supposed, with propriety, to have been the identical stone described in the above poem.

Not only was this delicate poise of the stone produced sometimes, as among the Druids, by art, but a feeling of sacredness was also attached to such productions; and they were connected, as in the Druidical ritual, with interment. Dr. Borlase supposes those stones to have been objects of worship among the ancients.

CRYMLYN.

Crymlyn is situate about three miles eastward of Swansea, between Tawy and Nedd rivers, near the sea. It was once the boundary of *Dyfed* and *Morganwg*, *Dimitia* and *Glamorgan*; but at present it is the boundary of the Bishopricks of *St. David's* and *Landaff*. In this place there is a lake and an extensive bog. Tradition says, that there was a town, in ancient days, in the same spot, but was swallowed up by an earthquake. There are, also, many superstitious traditions respecting the place, that I cannot consider worth recording.

From the name of the lake and its localities, it is evident, that it has been a place of some note for worship according to the Druidical rites. Some old writers make mention of the Fairies, that dwelt in lakes, having towns and fine palaces beneath them; which, probably, gave rise to the many traditions of this, and other such places.

There is an account, in ancient history, of the heroic and famous *Don ab Gwyddno*, combating with those Fairies, &c.; also, of *Llyn Llison*, and attrac-

ting powers of its waters, viz., the *Lake of Llifon*. "If it should happen that any person should be standing with his face towards the lake *Llifon*, and if any of the spray of that water should touch his clothes, it would be with the greatest difficulty he could keep or save himself from being attracted or sucked into the lake."—*See Gr. ab Arthur*.—I have mentioned this, to demonstrate the sentiments and opinions that prevailed in the first centuries.

The etymology of the word *Crymlyn*, I take to be from *crym*, to bow; and *llyn*, a lake. Some writers suppose, that the word *cromlech*, which implies the same action as *crym* in *Crymlyn*, is derived from the inclined position of the altar; which is generally found to be placed like a desk, with one side lower than the other.

I cannot see the propriety of giving it this name, merely because it is in an inclined position: this, in fact, does not convey the idea of bowing; which, on the contrary, *crym* and *crom* (being of the same meaning) evidently do. The altar being inclined, could not be of such importance as to give it that name; therefore it must have a higher and more dignified meaning. Consequently, I presume that the word is taken from the posture and manner of the worshippers, bowing before the altar, when they offered up their sacrifices; and, therefore, that the altar was called *Cromlech*, and the lake *Crymlyn*—the lake where they bowed and worshipped. As a further evidence of this statement, there is now a mount projecting into the *Crymlyn*, or lake, which is called by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to the present day, *Banc yr Allor*, or mount of the altar; which name they have received traditionally.

The said lake was at one time much larger than at present. In history, it is sometimes called *Llyn Conan*; after *Conan*, the grandson of *Rhys ap Tewdwr*, King of South Wales, who lost his life by being drowned in this lake, when he was returning from the memorable battle of *Hirwaun Wrgant*, in which

his grandsire fell when fighting for his country, against Fitzhamon and the Norman adventurers, about the close of the eleventh century; but the ancient name of the lake is *Crymlyn*, by which it is called to the present day.—*See Caradoc's Hist.*

In the dark ages of superstition, before the healing beams of the Sun of Righteousness appeared through the Gospel, which brought life and immortality to light, and chased away the gloomy mists of paganism from our land; the lakes, rivers, and mountains were considered sacred, and held in great veneration by the inhabitants of Britain.

The worship of mountains, hills, and rivers, among the Ancient Britons, is mentioned by Gildas, Chap. II. And that such superstition was not peculiar to the Celtic tribes, appears from the laws which, down to the eleventh century, prohibited the Anglo-Saxons from worshipping the tree, the rock, or fountain. *See Palgrave's Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth.*

Indeed, the same superstitious belief is prevalent among many nations to the present day, and the same respect paid to rivers, lakes, &c. by them as was in Britain. It is very singular, that there are lakes, &c. which have Gomerian, or Welsh names, even in China; one of them in particular, I think, deserves notice. The emperor of China is styled "The holy son of heaven, sole guardian of the earth and father, &c. of his people." In fact, he is believed to be of heavenly origin, by his superstitious subjects. "The monarch caused his genealogy to be drawn out and published, wherein it was given out, that the daughter of heaven, descending on the borders of the lake *Poul Kouri*, at the foot of the white mountain, and eating some red fruit there, conceived, and bore a son partaking of her nature, endowed with wisdom, &c; and that from him is descended the present son of heaven, who fills the throne of China. Such were the precepts of the learned Confucius, 500 years before the

Christian era; and such is the doctrine of the Chinese at this hour.”—*Chambers's Information*.

Poul Kouri signifies, according to the Welsh language, the pool, or lake, of the giants.

LLANAU, OR CHURCHES.

Llanau are the most ancient places of meeting among the *Cymry* and the Druids. *Llan*, singular, or *Llanau*, plural, according to Dr. Owen Pugh, means a clear place, or spot of ground to deposit anything; a yard, or enclosure; a place of gathering together; a church, or place of meeting. *Corfflan*, a burying-ground; *perllan*, an orchard, &c. Probably that the word *llan* is derived from *lle*, a place; *an*, or *anian*, nature—the place of nature.

But it is equally as probable, that the word is derived from *llwyn*, a grove; and, according to some learned men, that the word *llwyn* is from the Hebrew *alun*, oak. Hence *llwyn derw*, an oak grove; and from *llwyn*, that the word *llan* was formed, signifying an enclosed place. It is inferred, from the case of Abraham planting the oaks at Beer-sheba, under which he worshipped the everlasting God, (Gen. xxi. 23.) that it was a general practice to assemble in groves, and worship under oaks, before his time; and, consequently, from this custom of the patriarchs, that the oak became a sacred tree among the Gentiles. The oaks of Dodona, in Greece, were sacred to Jupiter—“*sacra Jovi quercus*.” The consecrated oak of Jupiter was proverbial among the Greeks and Romans. Among the Celtic nations in ancient days, the greatest respect was paid to the groves, and particularly to the oak and the mistletoe. The last they called by several names, and shewed it the greatest reverence and religious adoration, under the direction of the Druids. Pliny says, “The Druids do not

consider anything so sacred as the mistletoe, and the tree upon which it grows." They considered this plant sent to them from heaven; and as a token that God himself had chosen the oak upon which it was found. It is said, that the Germans called it *gwytheyl*, the good medicine, or all-heal. They imputed to it wonderful and infallible virtues. When it was found, it was cut with a golden hook, and great care taken lest it should be defiled by anything. Afterwards, they sacrificed a white bull, praying unto God to bless his own gift to them that received and partook of it. "Is it possible," says a respectable and learned author, "for a Christian, by reading this account, not to think of Him who was promised as the "Desire of all nations;" Him, whose name is the *Branch*—the Tree that bears twelve manner of fruit, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations."—*Geiriadur Charles*.

To this, the author of the "Identity of the Hebrew and Druidical Religions" subscribes, and says, "The Israelites looked for a Redeemer, who should come in future times. They typified his advent by the scape goat, and a variety of emblems. The Druids did the same; they looked for some one who was typified under the emblem of the mistletoe." Notwithstanding that nearly eighteen centuries have passed away since the learned Pliny wrote, yet, there are some remains left that tend to corroborate what he says of the Druids: and it is a remarkable fact, that, among the several names by which the branch, or mistletoe, is called by the *Cymry* at the present day, one is *oll-iach*, or all-heal.

The same learned author referred to above, says, "The Druids represented the Almighty by the oak, supposing that that tree (emblematically) exhibited in the liveliest manner, the God of vegetative nature, eternal, omnipotent, and self-existing; defying the assaults of a past eternity; and looking on the future as only equal to himself in duration."

From him came the Branch, so much spoken of

by the ancient prophets—the Curer of all our ills; who is indeed “the resurrection and the life, &c.” “Without pledging ourselves to the belief of every sentiment contained in this passage,” says the learned author of “The Patriarchal Religion of Britain,” “we beg to make one remark; that as it was a very general practice of the ancients to represent, and convey their ideas by means of symbols taken from nature, especially by trees and plants, &c.; that as trees in the garden of Eden were divinely pointed out, as emblematical of the most awful ideas—*life and happiness, death and misery*; and that as the promised Saviour is repeatedly characterized in the sacred scriptures by the symbolical appellations of Branch, Rod, Root of David, Tree of Life, Plant of Renown; we see no reason whatsoever for denying to the British Druids, the right and propriety of making the misletoe of the oak a symbol of the promised Saviour, and calling it *oll-iach*, or curer of all ills, to remind themselves, and the people, of the benefits which that Saviour would confer on them.” However, it is well known, that there was a general expectation among many Gentile nations, of some great person who was to come; and who is referred to, in sacred writ, under the character of “Desire of all Nations.” It is very probable, that they received this, among other important subjects, from the patriarch Noah.

We shall now return to the *Llanau*, or the most ancient names of churches, among the *Cymry*, as being derived from the ancient Druids. In those places the people used to assemble for the purposes of instruction, &c.; but after the introduction of the inestimable system of Christianity, they were converted into churches, and used for divine worship.

There is a great number of *Llanau* in the principality, that still retain the name. There are, also, many towns and villages that have this appellation, called after the names of the first churches built in those places; such as the City of Llandav, or Lan-

daff, Llanilltyd, Llantrisant, Llangyfelach, Llan-
elly, Llandilo, with many more that could be
mentioned.

Upon examination it will evidently appear, that those churches, called *Llanau*, are the most ancient of all ; and those that have the appellation of Saint appended to them, such as Saint David's, and Saint Peter, are supposed to be of later date. To this, I am happy to find, the learned Professor Rees, in his valuable essay upon the Welsh saints, subscribes, and says "That *Llan* is the first. In determining the antiquity of chapels, it may be considered, that such as have their names compounded with this word, are of the older kind—*Llan*, meaning the sacred spot—corresponding with the Greek *Temenos*."

That the *Llanau* were originally Druidical places of worship and instruction, and, probably, of interment, I infer from the names of such as are compounded with *Llan*, viz., *Llansadwrn*. There are several churches that have this appellation ; which evidently mean the church dedicated to Sadwrn, or Saturn—the same as the seventh day of the week, Saturday. There are two churches and parishes of this name in Carmarthenshire ; one in Denbighshire ; and another in Anglesea. There may be others, but of these I am certain ; from which I infer, that they are of very early origin—before the introduction of Christianity into the country ; as it is very evident, that Christians would not have dedicated their churches, nor days, to the heathen deity.

As another proof of the antiquity of *Llanau*, I beg the reader's attention to the following—*Llannevydd*, *Llanrhydhuan*, &c. ; which appear as containing remains from remote antiquity, and tend to substantiate what has been said. The first, I am persuaded, refers to *Nevydd Nav Neivion*, and was dedicated to him at a very early period. This *Nevydd* appears to be the same person as *Dwyfan*,

noticed before, but under another name. In the ninety-seventh Triad, we are told of the three primary and extraordinary works of the Isle of Britain—first, “The ship of *Nevydd Nav Neivion*, which brought in it a male and female of all living, when the lake of floods burst forth, &c. and inundated the world.” It is supposed, that Neptune, the god of the sea, refers to the same person as *Neivion*.

Again, it appears that *Llanrhydduan*, within a short distance of *Maen-ketti*, or Arthur’s Stone, as mentioned before, is very ancient; and derives its name from *Hu*, or *Huan*, of Bardic Theology. From the name of this church, I infer that it was dedicated to the same.

Hu is an epithet of the Deity in the Bardic Theology; and *Huan* is another appellation descriptive of his omniscience. *Huan* is also a name for the sun, in the Welsh language; and was used in the fifth century as such, as we learn from Taliesin, the Bard, who says—













































“Ni wyr neb pan
Ruddir bron HUAN;
Pan yw per erwain;
Pan yw gwyrliw brain.”

The word *Llan* for church, pervades not only Wales and Cornwall, but many parts of England and the Continent; and seems to have given names to several places in those countries, such as Lancaster, in England; Lanbryd, in Scotland; (which is supposed to be 3000 years old); Llanguedoc, &c. in France. And after all the various explanations that have been given of London, it is not improbable that it is derived from *Llan Don*—the church of *Don*, or the grove dedicated to the famous *Don ab Gwyddno*, who is described as one of the most famous and renowned men of antiquity.

It is very remarkable, that there are several places called after *Don*, and very probable refer to the said heroic *Don ab Gwyddno*; such as Hendon, in the metropolis, and the river Hendon, viz.,

the old Don; the rivers Don, Doncaster, Donnington, &c. There are no less than seven places in England called Donnington; all of which seem to corroborate the account given by the *Cymry* of the celebrated *Don* of antiquity.

COELBREN Y BEIRDD, OR GOMERIAN CHARACTERS.

 a short	 b	 ng	 ll
 a long	 f	 t	 l
 e	 m	 th	 rh
 e long	 m	 nh	 r
 i	 p	 d	 chw
 o	 ff	 dd	 s
 o long	 ph	 n	 f
 w	 mh	 n	 b
 w long	 c	 n	 d
 u	 ch	 h	
 u	 ngh		
 y	 g		 g

This curious alphabet is called, in the language of the Ancient Britons, *Coelbren y Beirdd*, or Stave of the Bardic Symbols. This name, probably, refers to the office of the Bards, as recorders of pedigrees, events, &c. in ancient days, and to the genuineness and correctness of those records cut upon wood

by them. "Some tribes of the Britons, the *Cymry* more particularly," says Dr. O. Pugh, "from very remote antiquity, were possessed of a characteristic alphabet, containing all the appropriate and necessary signs for representing every modification of sound in their language. Those letters, amounting to forty-three in number, precisely denote all the simple articulate sounds in the language, and they never vary or serve to express any other sounds; so that every simple articulation has a distinct character to represent it."

The forms of the letters consisted of straight or perpendicular strokes and angles, as all curves were, necessarily, excluded in consequence of their being written, or cut across the sides of square pieces of sticks. Those sticks, or staves, after being so cut, were put into a frame-like form, and so inserted as to admit of being turned round, to facilitate the reading of the inscription on all sides. This aggregate of staves was called *Peithynen*, Elucidator.

Allusions to such a method of writing upon rods, or staves, very frequently occur in the voluminous remains of the poetry of the Bards of Wales, of all periods. This is an important evidence of its existence from the most early times. To such evidence, may be added another of at least an equally decided character, and which is, that the *Coelbren y Beirdd* is preserved, among many other curious remains collected under the sanction of several congresses of the Bards, convened in the course of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, by the Nevilles, the Herberts, and other noblemen and gentlemen of South Wales. The last of these congresses was held in 1681, at Bewpyr Castle, in the County of Glamorgan; wherein all the prior collections were blended into one, examined, and sanctioned by the procuration of Sir Richard Bassett. For the more complete verification of the genuineness of the Bardic alphabet, a third important proof to be referred to, is the

inscription on ancient stone monuments. Amongst those preserved in Camden's "*Britannia*," several may be seen having the Bardic Characters occasionally intermixed with those that are generally Roman; such are the *l* in legion, the *s* in *filius* and *ejus*; also, the *ff*, *p*, *f*, and the *t*.—*Dr. Owen Pugh's Outlines.*

It has been said, by some persons, that those letters were invented by Mr. Edward Williams, (*Iolo Morganwg*), and Dr. O. Pugh; but this is evidently false. There are numerous references made in the Triads and writings of the old Bards, of letters, such as those cut upon staves, as well as the instrument used for the purpose, and the name given to such persons as could write upon wood, &c. I shall give a few specimens out of the many that are extant; such as reading wood, cutting poems upon wood, and the word used by the Bards for a person who cut letters upon wood; viz., *saer*, a wright, or a cutter in wood, or stone. It is very probable, that the English words, *wright* and *write*, will be found to be of the same derivation, when closely examined.

This point I shall dismiss with referring to one portion of the celebrated Bard, *Taliesin*, who lived in the fifth century; which evidently refers to letters of this kind, when he says—

“Myfi yw Taliesin,
Penbardd y gorllewin.
Mi a adwaen pob corsen
Yn ogof Gorddewin.”

“I am Taliesin, the chief Bard of the West. I know every rod or reed that is in the Supreme Diviner's cave.”

Being in conversation with Mr. Rootsey, a gentleman of Bristol, he observed upon this subject, “That notwithstanding the objections made by some of the learned against the authenticity of the Ancient British letters of *Coelbren y Beirdd*, it is a fact, that there were some emporitan coins found in

Spain some time back, by excavating, with those letters upon them, and which could not be understood only by means of the letters called *Coelbren y Beirdd*."

Again, those Gomerian Characters appear to be very ancient, if not the most antique of any known. When compared with other letters, it will be seen, that their form is much better adapted for cutting upon wood and stone ; consequently, they are considered to be the plainest and most simple letters that are extant. Mr. Buckingham, in his lecture delivered at the Town-hall, Swansea, noticed the antiquity of the Arabic Characters, stating, "That he considered them to be the oldest of all letters, because of their shape and square form." A learned gentleman present made the following remark, at the close of the meeting, upon the lecturer's argument :—"That upon such ground, the Ancient British Characters claimed the priority for antiquity." They were produced, and the learned lecturer was quite astonished, as he had not seen them before, and candidly said, "I must allow that the *Coelbren y Beirdd* letters deserve the claim of priority to the Arabic, or any others, upon the ground of argument that I have laid down."

It is not known who was the inventor of letters and writing. All agree that it is an admirable and inestimable art to paint speech, and speak to the eyes ; and by tracing out characters in different forms, to give colour and body to thought. Some are of opinion that God, when he inspired man with reason and speech, communicated to him also the knowledge of writing.

Josephus speaks of certain columns erected before the deluge, by the sons of Seth, upon which they had written astronomical observations and inventions. Adam and Enoch also are supposed to have been reputed authors of certain books ; and, consequently, that they had the use of writing. Others maintain, that the use of letters is much

later. Some ascribe the honour of them to Abraham—others to Moses—others to the Phœnicians—others to Saturn—others to the Egyptians—others divide the honour of the invention among several, and acknowledge that it began among the Eastern people, and was much later among those in the West—that some invented, and others perfected the invention—that letters at first were uncommon in their use, and imperfect in their forms; and that afterwards they were perfected, and their use rendered more familiar.

It is natural to suppose, from what is extant, that the patriarch Noah, and his sons, were acquainted with letters before the deluge; and that their ancestors had some means of recording the history of the old world, of persons, their occupations, the arts and sciences they possessed, and the events that took place in the antideluvian world; which have been handed down to posterity by Moses in the book of Genesis, &c. This is evident also from the reference made by the apostle Jude to the prophecy of Enoch, the seventh from Adam. It is well known, that a book under that title existed in the primitive church. This book has been recently discovered, and translated by Archbishop Laurence, in which the quotation is found.—*Horne's Crit. Introd., and Cott. Bible.*

From this I infer, therefore, that letters, or some similar means of preserving the history of the world, were known before the flood; and that the Divine Author of every blessing, who bestowed upon man the noble and divine gift of speech, gave him also the ability of transferring his thoughts to posterity, either by the invaluable art of writing, or of painting speech by means of hieroglyphics; and that it was preserved by the patriarch, from whom it was received by his descendants. The founders of several nations retained some faint, but confused ideas of the knowledge of letters; perhaps, this may tend to account for the imperfect and incom-

plete alphabets of different people. However, it appears very probable, that letters were no new invention in the time of Moses ; for from his writings it is very evident, that he was well acquainted with them at an early period. But as there are various opinions upon the subject, I shall pass on to the Bardic Characters, which have been preserved, by the ancient British Bards, from time immemorial.

Those Gomerian Characters must be classed with Druidical remains. They deserve our attention as curious specimens of art and science, handed down to us from the sages of antiquity. Those letters have been more particularly preserved in Glamorgan, by the Bards of *Tir Iarll*; and rescued by the celebrated Bard and antiquarian, *Iolo Morganwg*; to whom, it is thought, we are indebted for their preservation from being totally lost.

Those letters, according to Dr. Owen Pugh, are forty-three in number. The learned author of the "Celtic Researches" has produced only forty ; which, he says, were originally hieroglyphics, taken from the sprigs of trees, and in process of time were converted into letters. Mr. Davies has cited several passages from the ancient Bards, proving, that they had a method of extracting knowledge from the branches and sprigs of trees, by reading their different forms ; and that the Bardic characters contain nearly all the old Runic and Pelastic letters, which are considered to be some of the most ancient Characters, and upon which all the European alphabets are founded.

However, it is evident that the Bardic letters contain the most complete alphabet of any, as to number and sounds ; having a letter for every articulate sound expressed by the human voice, and no letter having more than one simple sound ; each being peculiarly distinct, and one of them, viz., *Ll*, a consonant, not known in any other alphabet, nor its sound in any other language. Thus we see, that

there is one letter and sound peculiar to it, and there is every probability that it was the language of the Druids of antiquity. From its construction, power, copiousness, and roots, or elementary words, it is presumed, by some, that it was the primitive language.

With this I cannot agree. It is more probable, according to the tenor of Scripture, that the primitive language of the world does not exist as a distinct language, but that it spread abroad into various branches when the confusion of tongues took place, and forms the basis of all the different languages.

We are informed, by the inspired penman, that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech ; and that the Lord confounded the language of all the earth, at Babel. Therefore, this opinion is well founded, and upon the best authority. But that the Gomerian, or Welsh language, is one of the most ancient, expressive, and copious branches of the primitive language, will appear evident, upon examination, to every unprejudiced mind. And that it contains a greater number of words, roots, or elements of language than any other, as the late learned Dr. O. Pugh, and other distinguished scholars, have most satisfactorily established.

Ever since the Roman invasion, says the learned author of the "Patriarchal Religion," &c., "The Ancient British language has had to contend with the most untoward circumstances. Attempts have been repeatedly made at its entire extinction ; but it still lives, and invites a comparison at the present moment with any language in the world, for antiquity, purity, copiousness, force, melodiousness, and adaptability to every kind of poetry. Its vocabulary contains not fewer than *one hundred thousand words* ; and its system of versification is superior to anything of the kind in the whole world. It is reduced to twenty-four elementary classes, from which every kind of verse is deducible. And it

has been strictly ascertained, that there is not in any language, ancient or modern, any kind of verse that is not used in the Ancient British. Many kinds are in common use in the principality at this day, so singularly different from what has ever yet been known in Europe, that no conception of them can be conveyed, except by acquaintance with the language itself."

And will it be believed that this language, which has so often been objected to on account of its supposed overplus of consonants, contains some stanzas of poetry *entirely of vowels*, and composed according to the strictest rules of alliteration!

I shall give one instance of the kind, which is generally considered to be a great curiosity. It is an *englyn* upon either the spider or the silk worm—

"O'i wiw wy i weu e a,—a'i weau
O'i wyau e weua :
E weua ei we aia,
A'i weau yw ieuau ia."

It will be observed that the *w*, in the Welsh language, is a vowel.

Though it is said, by those who are unacquainted with it, that it is a harsh guttural language, yet it will be found that it contains some of the finest specimens of poetical effusions. The following lines upon the Harp, evince that it possesses, in a remarkable degree, some of the softest and most melodious sounds:—

"Mae o leisiau meluson,
Mil o hyd y'mola hon."

Within its bosom there abounds
A thousand sweet melodious sounds.



BARDIC SYMBOL.

It appears, from the Triads and other ancient accounts, that the *Cymry* made use of hieroglyphics at some remote period. I shall quote the following Triad as an instance, in which it is said that hieroglyphics were used:—“*Tri gweinyddion gwybod-aeth; cŵn, arwydd, a llythyr.*”—*Barddas*. “The three agents of knowledge; song, hieroglyphic, and letter.”—*Dr. O. Pugh*.—The same may be inferred from figures that are upon some ancient British coins.

The above Bardic symbol is thought to be one of those ancient hieroglyphics; and we are told by *Carnhuanawc*, in his “*Hanes Cymru*,” that he was informed by *Iolo Morganwg*, that this symbol signified light. In some extracts, taken out of ancient grammars upon the subject of letters, given in Mr. Taliesin Williams’s Treatise, this statement is corroborated.

It is stated that hieroglyphics and letters were first revealed to *Menw*, *ab y Tairgwaedd*, or *Menw*, the Ancient; son of the Three Loud Calls. It is a dialogue between *Macwy* and his teacher—“How came we to understand first of letters, concerning form and sound?” Wherein it is said in answer, “That the Deity, when there was no living being but himself, pronounced and declared his name, and instantaneously with the word came the rapturous shout of all living beings; and that word was the most melodious that was ever heard in music or song; and instantly with that voice, or sound of speech, there was *light*, and in the light a form or hieroglyphic, and the name three voices of three united vocal sounds; and in the vision three hieroglyphics, which were the colour and figure of light.

In union with the sound, colour, and figure of that word, were the first three letters, and from the conjunction of their three sounds, were all other sounds of letters formed; according to *Menw, hen ab y Tair-gwaedd*, who heard the word, and made the figure of the sound of God's name, first. Others say, that *Einigan Gawr* made the first letter; and the figure, or hieroglyphic, of the name of God was what he saw, when he found himself alive and in being instantaneously with the word ! ”

An apology, perhaps, may be deemed necessary for the imperfect translation of this mysterious passage of ancient composition. However, I may add, that I have endeavoured, as nearly as I could, to give its true sense and meaning, as contained in the Welsh.

It is a matter of difficulty to understand to what period of time the said extract refers; but it is certain that it is a grand and curious specimen of ancient writing that is well worth being preserved from falling into oblivion.

By examining the first chapter of Genesis, it will appear very probable that it refers to that sublime passage of holy writ, in which it is said, “And God said, Let there be light, and there was light, &c.” Also, to the description of every living being springing into existence, and rejoicing greatly when created by the power of the word of God, when he said, *Bydded, ac felly y bu*.

The account given of the origin of letters by the ancient *Cymry*, far surpasses anything advanced by the learned Greeks and Romans; and is a most noble and sublime idea of accounting for the invention of so grand, beneficial, and inestimable an art; by the assistance of which we are able to converse with our friends although they may be thousands of miles from us; and by reading letters we collect honey from the choicest flowers that bloomed in olden times, by which means, the “mighty dead,” though mouldering in the dust, yet

speak, and present to us some of the finest pearls, and richest gems of literature. Yes, by those symbols of thought, we may look back and ponder the labours of many ages! But above all, by the means of letters, that represent the mind and will of the Divine Being, we are able to look forward and reflect upon the wonderful things that we are destined to behold! and through such agency, we have an infallible rule to direct us in the right, and warn us to shun evil, and cleave to what is good.

Considering the antiquity of the Triads, hieroglyphics, Bardic letters, and also the ancient mode of writing on rods, (which mode we evidently recognize as used by Moses, mentioned before, and, as we infer, practiced before his time) known in Britain anterior to Christianity, as Mr. James says, they satisfactorily decide, in the affirmative, the question as to the Druids' use and knowledge of letters. It is, likewise, very probable, that the art of writing, in its rude state, accompanied the nation of the *Cymry* from the seat of dispersion.

PEITHYNEN, ELUCIDATOR; OR BARDIC BOOK.

This book was formed by uniting several of the written or inscribed staves in a frame at each end of them. It will be observed, that those staves were cut to the same length, with either four square sides for four lines, or three for triplets, of the same size; consequently, a single stave contained, when the letters were inscribed on them, either four or three lines. These styles, or frame, were made into two halves, with semi-holes in each part; and these two parts of the style were fixed upon the ends of the staves, and then tied at each end—a number of those being put together formed a kind of portable book, which is called *Peithynen*, or Elucidator. It

was so constructed that each bar might be turned for the facility of reading—the end of each running out alternately on both sides of the frame, which will be seen by referring to the plate.

A continuation of this mode of writing is still preserved by some of the Bards. The late celebrated Bard of Glamorgan (*Iolo*), invariably kept one with him, as a specimen of the ancient writing of the *Cymry*. There is one of those Bardic Books also at Singleton, in the possession of J. H. Vivian, Esq., the respected Representative of Swansea.

A continuation of this mode of writing also may be found in the Runic, or Log Almanack, of the Northern States of Europe; in which the engraving on square pieces of wood, has been continued to so late a period as the sixteenth century. Two curious specimens of the Runic Almanacks, are preserved in the library belonging to Cheetham's Hospital, Manchester. The Scythians also conveyed their ideas by marking certain figures, and a variety of lines, upon splinters of wood. Aulus Gellius says, (*lib.* 2.) that the ancient laws of Solon, preserved at Athens, were cut in tablets of wood.—See *Fry's Pantographia. Biblical Anecdotes.*

But the most similar to the Bardic mode, and most ancient of any, are those referred to in passages of Scripture, which will be found in Ezek. xxxvii. 16. and Numb. xvii. 2, &c. The last mentioned is particularly remarkable, and appears to be very much like the Bardic mode of writing upon rods, and reaches to very remote antiquity.

The passage referred to runs thus:—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod according to the house of their fathers, of all their princes according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.—And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and behold, the *rod* of Aaron for the house of Levi was

budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds !”

Dr. E. Clarke, when in Sweden, saw several staves with Runic letters inscribed on them, on two sides ; and of several of these they formed an almanack. The Ancient Britons wrote on staves, which were made triangular, or square. Similar to this was the mode of keeping account by tallies ; which is still used in the metropolis. “ It is curious to observe, says the author of the “ Cottage Bible,” that they were, and still are, used in the Exchequer. The teller of the Exchequer was, in fact, the tally-keeper.” To this, I may add, that the same practice of keeping accounts by tallies, is still prevalent among coal-shippers, &c., in Wales.

It appears that the *Cymry*, from remote antiquity, made use of the said mode of writing ; but it is also evident, that they had another mode ; viz., writing or inscribing on stones, so that it cannot be determined which of the two is the most ancient.

We are informed in the Triads, that one of the three great works of the Isle of Britain, was the stones of *Gwyddon Ganebon*, upon which was read or written all the arts and sciences of the world.

This Triad is in connection with the aforesaid account of *Dwyvan* and the deluge ; and, undoubtedly, refers to a vast and important collection of knowledge inscribed on pillars or tablets of stone ; and tends to prove that the *Cymry* possessed the knowledge of letters, and the art of engraving in stone, at a very early period. We have also an account, in Welsh, of the introduction of parchment into the Island, as early as the first century of the Christian era ; in which it is acknowledged that the mode of writing upon parchment was first introduced into this country, from Rome, by *Bran* the Blessed—the father of *Caractacus* ; who there learnt the method of writing on parchment, as well as the manner of preparing it. After this he also taught the *Cymry* the same method ; and its adoption

became so general, that the old method of writing upon wood was very soon nearly forgotten.

This method afterwards was only known to a few Bards, who continued to preserve the old mode as a memorial of the ancient knowledge of the *Cymry*; so that this mode was called *Coelbren y Beirdd*—because it was upon wood that the Bards inscribed their poems, memorable facts, and principal sciences; among which the ancient Triads, probably, were the most important that were preserved. The laws of *Dynwall Moelmud* (*Dunwallo Moelmitus*), are in triplets, and still preserved. This King, according to the chronology of several learned men, reigned about four hundred years before the Christian era.

It will be seen, that there are forty-four letters given in this work; being one more than those contained in the valuable Dictionary of Dr. Owen Pugh. This one I have supplied from the copy of Mr. E. Williams (*Iolo*). Although this letter is omitted in the Dictionary referred to, it is acknowledged in a note in the same book, that the whole number is forty-four.—*See Outlines.*

Having had the privilege, since this Essay was written, of perusing the excellent Treatise of Mr. Taliesin Williams (*Ab Iolo*), upon the “Antiquity and Authenticity of the Bardic Stave and Letters,” which gained the prize at the Abergavenny Eisteddfod, I am happy to find that it is, upon the whole, in accordance with his valuable Treatise. Mr. Williams has produced abundant proof to substantiate his subject beyond all doubt. He has shewn that the ancient Bards, &c. used hieroglyphics, at some remote period; that the ancient *Cymry* considered those, and their letters, to be of divine origin; and that *Einigan Gawr* was the first person to whom they were communicated by the Divine Being.

It appears that a singular circumstance took place in the fifteenth century; from which we learn

that the ancient invention of writing upon staves became, at that time, very valuable to the Welsh people, in consequence of certain oppressive laws that were enacted by the English Government—prohibiting learning amongst the *Cymry*, and keeping from them paper, and other articles for registering their records, &c. Therefore, they and their Bards were obliged to have recourse to the old method of writing upon wood. This circumstance, probably, caused the Chair of *Tir Iarll*, and the Chair of Glamorgan, to adopt a rule compelling the Bards to produce a specimen of the Bardic Book every year, lest the method should be lost. Indeed, I think that the preservation of this curious and ancient invention, may be attributed to the said circumstance; which convinced the Bards that if this method were lost, and such a prohibition became a law in another age, that their descendants would be deprived of letters entirely.

This circumstance is given by Mr. Williams, on the authority of *Llewelyn Sion*, of *Llangewydd*; a very respectable Bard, who lived in the sixteenth century, and who is respectfully mentioned by Sir Edward Mansel,* of Margam; who wrote, in 1575, an account of the gaining of Glamorgan by the Normans.

In addition to the obligation imposed upon the Bards to preserve the ancient practice of writing, *Llewelyn Sion* says, that the Bards had recourse to the *Coelbren* as the only means of recording their learning. And that the restricting laws referred to were imposed upon them, in consequence of the insurrection and civil war that existed in the days of *Owen Glyn Dwr*.

*I have been informed, upon good authority, that a number of old books and manuscripts that were deposited in an apartment of the old ruins of Margam Abbey, many years back, were destroyed by the school-boys in lighting the fire of the school, which was held in a portion of the Abbey. It is not improbable, therefore, to suppose that those were part of that gentleman's collection; and that many valuable manuscripts have been lost in consequence.—There is a volume of manuscripts of *Llewelyn John*, who is mentioned by Sir Edward Mansel, now in the possession of J. H. Vivian, Esq., Singleton, with his signature appended to them.

It is to be trusted that the *Cymry* will never again be destined to have recourse to the rude mode of recording their literature upon wood. But let us cherish the hope that Wales is designed by a gracious Providence to have the freedom, and irradiating light of the press, in its most extensive degree, as it is in the present age—an age in which we enjoy the brilliant blaze of day. And in contrasting both ages, may we learn to appreciate the many privileges that we now enjoy.

There are several other ancient customs that may be noticed, and appear to be Druidical remains; but as they are not peculiar to Glamorgan, I shall pass on to certain Druidical remains in other places, which are closely connected with the foregoing, and are worthy of the attention of the antiquary.

STONEHENGE AND ABURY.

I shall now notice the principal, and, perhaps, the most ancient stone monuments of Druidical remains in all the Island of Great Britain; viz., Stonhenge and Abury. These, probably, were, at one time, the first and chief temples erected by the Ancient Britons; where, it is supposed by some of the most learned antiquarians, the nation assembled at certain times of the year—held their principal conventions—managed the affairs of the state—conducted their religious rites—and offered their national sacrifices, similar to the Carnutes, in Gaul. “That Stonehenge was a Druidical temple of high eminence, and that its construction evinces considerable proficiency in Astronomy,” says Mr. James, “has been the decided opinion of many respectable antiquaries. Its ancient British name, *Côr Gawr*, means the great Cathedral, or Grand Choir.” It is described by Mr. Camden, to be, in his time, a huge and monstrous piece of work. “For within the current of the ditch,” he says, “there are erec-

ted in the manner of a crown, in three ranks or courses one within another, certain mighty and unwrought stones, whereof some are twenty-eight feet high, and seven feet broad ! upon the heads of which, others like overthwart pieces do rest crosswise, with small tenons and mortises, so that the whole frame seemeth to hang ; on which account we call it *Stoneheng*.”—*Camden’s Britannia*.

“It is situated on a rising ground anciently environed with a deep trench, still appearing about thirty feet broad ; so that betwixt it and the work itself, a large and void space of ground was left. It had from the plain three open entrances, the most conspicuous of which lies north-east : at each of which were raised on the outside of the trench, two huge stones, gate-wise ! parallel to which on the inside, are two others of less proportion. After one has passed the ditch, he ascends thirty-five yards before he comes at the work itself. The whole work in general being of a circular form, is one hundred and ten feet in diameter, and without a roof.

“The whole outer circle, originally, consisted of thirty upright stones : upon the top of these were placed an equal number of imposts in such a manner, that the whole circle was linked together in a continued corona, by the imposts being carried quite round. Two yards and a half within this circle, is a range of lesser stones forty in number ; forming with the outer circle, a very noble and delightful walk, three hundred feet in circuit.—These stones were one-half the height of the exterior uprights.

“The adytum, or cell, which presents itself next, is a most noble and beautiful ellipsis ; nor is there anything like it in all antiquity. It is an original invention of the Druids, and an ingenious contrivance to relax the inner and more sacred part, where they performed their religious offices. The two outer circles were no disadvantage to the view from hence, but added much to the solemnity of the

place, and of the duties discharged in it by the frequency and variety of their intervals. They that were within would see a fine effect produced by this elliptical figure, included in a circular corona, and having a large hemisphere of the heavens for its covering.

"The exterior oval is composed of certain compages of stones called Trilithons; being made each of two uprights with an impost at top. The uprights are ten in number, and the imposts five. The inner curve consists of nineteen upright stones in a pyramidal form. Their height is unequal like that of the Trilithons, rising higher towards the upper end of the adytum.

"As you look from the grand entrance towards the altar, or speaking stone, the tombs of the two hithermost Trilithons present themselves with a magnificent opening twenty-five cubits wide. One remarkable particular in the construction of this oval is, that the two hithermost Trilithons corresponding, that is, on the right and left hand next the grand entrance, are exceeded in height by the altar, thus improving in height and beauty from the lower to the upper end of the choir. Their respective heights are thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen cubits (Hebrew measure).

"The altar is of a blue, coarse, and fine marble, placed a little above the focus of the upper end of the ellipsis, four feet broad, sixteen feet long, and twenty inches thick; leaving around it room sufficient for the ministration of the priests. The whole number of the stones of which this superb temple was composed, is one hundred and forty."

"The appearance of Stonehenge," observes Dr. Stukely, "is stately, awful, and really august. When you enter the building, whether on foot or horseback, and cast your eyes around upon the yawning ruins, you are struck into an extatic reverie, which none can describe, and they only can be sensible of that feel it. The dark part of

ponderous impost over our heads, the chasm of sky between the lamps of the cell, the odd construction of the whole, and the greatness of every part, surprise. If you look upon the perfect part, you fancy entire quarries mounted up into the air! upon the rude havock below, you see as it were the bowels of a mountain turned inside outwards!"

"To the meeting of great assemblies, whether on religious or civil accounts, the place seems peculiarly adapted; for which purpose," says the Rev. W. Cooke, M.A., "I believe the world does not afford a nobler spot. Its situation is upon a hill, in Wiltshire, in the midst of an extended plain one hundred miles in circuit, in the centre of the Southern part of the kingdom: covered with numberless flocks of herds and sheep, in which respect the employment and the plains themselves are patriarchal; where the air itself is perfectly salubrious and exhilarating, and the yielding turf fine as the surface of a bowling-green."

From almost every adjoining eminence, the prospect is open into Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire, &c. "In such a consecrated place in the territory of the *Carnutes*, the centre of all Gaul, at a certain season of the year, the Druids of that Country were wont to meet; where and by whom all controversies were settled, and whose judgments and decisions were readily obeyed. Their discipline they fetched from Britain, whither those, who were willing to learn it, still went for instruction." —*Cæsar. Comment. lib. vi.*

"The ancient Druids of Britain were not singular in the erection of pillars, altars of stone, and circular temples," says the learned author of the "Patriarchal Religion of Britain."

The inhabitants of Syria erected unhewn pillars in their shaded groves. And uncovered circular temples abounded at one time in India, and the East generally. Mr. Maurice, the author of the "Indian Antiquities," speaking of Stonehenge, makes the

following remarks :—"Whoever has read, or may be inclined to read, my History of "Oriental Architecture," as connected with astronomical and mythological notions of the Ancients, may see most of the assertions realized in the form and management of this old Druid temple. For, in the first place, it is circular, as it is there proved all ancient temples were. In the second place, the adytum, or *sanctum sanctorum*, is an oval form representing the mundane egg, after the manner that all those adyta, in which the sacred fire perpetually blazed, were constantly fabricated. In the third place, the situation is fixed astronomically ; the grand entrance both of this temple, and that of Abury, being placed exactly north-east, as all the gates or portals of the ancient caverns and cavern temples were. In the fourth place, the number of stones and uprights, in the outward circle, making together exactly sixty, plainly alludes to the peculiar and prominent features of Asiatic astronomy, the *sexagenary cycle* ; while the number of stones, forming the minor circle of the cave, being exactly nineteen, displays to us the famous metonic, or rather Indian cycle ; and that of thirty repeatedly occurring, the celebrated *age or generations of the Druids*. Fifthly, the temple being uncovered, proves it to have been erected under impressions similar to those which animated the ancient Persians, who rejected the impious idea of confining the Deity within an inclosed shrine, however magnificent ; and therefore, consequently, it must have been erected before the age of Zoroaster, who flourished more than five hundred years before the Christian era, and who first covered the Persian temples. And finally, the heads and horns of oxen and other animals, found buried on the spot, prove that sanguinary sacrificial rites were actually practised within the awful bounds of this hallowed circle."

In the book of Exodus (chap. xxiv.), and also Deuteronomy (chap. xxvii.), we have a striking

account of two similar temples erected by the Jews. In the first it is thus written: "And Moses rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel, And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people." "If the twelve pillars," observes the author of the "Patriarchal Religion," were arranged in a circular form around the altar, as is believed by most antiquarians, then we behold here a temple of the same form with Stonehenge in Britain, used for the purpose of sacrificing oxen, &c. to the Lord, and of reading the law to the people. The circular temples of Britain were employed by the Druids," he adds, "for precisely similar purposes."

Again it is written, "And it shall be, on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, in Mount Ebal, and there shalt thou build an altar unto the Lord thy God, an altar of stones: thou shalt not lift up any iron tool upon them. Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones; and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God; and thou shalt offer peace-offerings, and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God." "With the exception of Mount Ebal," says the same author, "every word of this passage applies to the altars and temples of the British Druids. The directions here laid down for the Hebrews, must have been known long before the actual departure of the various families from the East."

Epiphanius says, "That at Shechem there was a temple built by the Samaritans, of a circular form. A similar temple existed at Gilgal, at which the grandest and most magnificent occurrences transpired. Here Samuel changed the theocracy of

the Hebrews into a monarchy; and it was here the people assembled to celebrate all their great festivals."

The compilers of "The Universal History" insist that Stonehenge is not a temple, but a monument; yet, the same authors, in Vol. 19, commend Dr. Stukely's observations as judicious. He says, that *Côr Gawr*, which is its ancient name, might properly be rendered the *great church or grand choir*. They allow also, observes the Rev. W. Cooke in his "Enquiry," that "It answers to the notion of a temple by reason of its sacredness, its resemblance to the ancient religious groves, and the sacrifices and other rites performed there. It answers to that of a sepulchral monument, on account of its being appropriated to the grandest funeral ceremonies, and its being the centre or *kibla*, to all the adjacent monuments round about; to that of an amphitheatre, on account of the funeral games and shows exhibited at it; and may also have served for a covering place of the national council, &c."

"And indeed," continues the same author, "that it answered all these purposes, will appear evident to every considering person. Possibly none of the ancient inhabitants of these Islands might have temples, in the modern acceptation of the term, covered and regularly inclosed as afterwards. But wherever an altar was placed, public sacrifices offered, and the Deity invoked, though there was nothing else, or but a single pillar set up for a *kibla*, there was properly a patriarchal temple.

"That the Barrows within sight of it have respect to Stonehenge; that sacrifices might be offered and religious offices there performed, and sports exhibited at some distance, at the celebration of each great funeral; is readily granted. Yet, surely all this does not oppose, but rather confirm the notion of its having been a temple." However, it is not improbable that it was both a temple and monument. That it is the remains of an ancient British

edifice, there is every reason to conclude, from its ancient name, *Côr Gawr*, and also the names of places in the neighbourhood.

It is a common opinion, that it was raised by Aurelius Ambrosius, to the memory of the British nobles massacred on this plain by Hengist and his confederates. Although some writers make it a matter of doubt, yet, this opinion has several learned advocates, and some old writers, to support it. That this wonderful structure was erected after that treacherous and lamentable event took place, is not probable, for it can be inferred, from many circumstances, that it is of a much older date. There is also every probability, that it was in this place the assembly of the Britons and Saxons was held; and that it was here they feasted together when the dreadful massacre took place, as recorded. From which circumstance it may be naturally inferred, that the English name of Stonehenge is derived from *Stone-Hengist*; referring to the place where Hengist treacherously slew the British chiefs. This name is now the general appellation of these ruins, and which has nearly superseded the ancient name of *Côr Gawr*.

There are other ruins and astonishing remains of antiquity, in the same county, about nineteen miles north of Stonehenge, and five miles West of Marlborough; which is far superior in grandeur, magnitude, and antiquity. Within its environs is the Village of Avebury, or Abury, remarkable, observes Sir D. Brewster, "For the remains of a Druidical temple, which has engaged the researches, and puzzled the conjectures of our most learned antiquarians.

"And it claims our attention as being one of the most stupendous monuments of British antiquities. From the Welsh Bards, we learn that Avebury was one of the three primary *gorseddau*, or supreme seats of Britain; the great national temple, or court of convention.

“There they assembled from all quarters of the Island, at their solemn festivals held at the Solstices and Equinoxes, where those, who desired to be perfectly skilled in Druidical science, repaired for instruction. That this was the grand metropolitan station, is rendered most probable from its magnitude, the convenience of its situation, *and the various British roads which emerge to the spot*; as also from the vast numbers of tumuli, or Barrows, and other relics of antiquity, found in its neighbourhood.

“The temple consisted of large unhewn stones, placed perpendicularly in the ground some distance from each other, disposed in parallel rows and circles, measuring from ten to twenty feet high above the ground, forty feet in circumference, and weighed from forty to fifty-four tons each! surrounded by a ditch thirty feet high, which covered twenty-two acres within a large circle consisting of one hundred stones, and including two double concentric circles composed with eighty-eight, and two hundred stones extending a mile—supposed to have been in all six hundred and fifty stones.”

“As a document of British antiquity, and singular monument of ancient customs, the temple of Avebury deserves the attention of the antiquarian and historian. And we cannot but regret the needless industry of those, who have laboured to destroy these venerable vestiges of former times.”—*Edinburgh Encyclopædia*.

“This temple was once the largest, and most interesting Celtic, or Druidical temple in Europe.” We are informed, “That Mr. Aubrey, a native of Wiltshire, and an ardent lover of antiquarian subjects, had visited Avebury in 1648. In the year 1663, he was commanded by King Charles II, to write some account of this remarkable monument; the monarch being then on his way to Bath, and having examined the whole in company with Dr. Charlton, who afterwards published an account of Stonehenge.”

We are also told, "Though Aubrey's account is very imperfect, and was never completed, yet, as they are the first records of the place, and contain some useful facts and evidences of the temple seventy-six years before Dr. Stukley commenced his survey, they are valuable and interesting to the antiquary." But it appears, that very little was known of Avebury before Dr. Stukely published his valuable work, entitled "Abury, a Temple of the British Druids," in 1743 ; in which the learned gentleman has given a minute description, with drawings, &c. of the place, and various objects in the vicinity; and from whom we learn, that this temple is founded on the more elevated part of a plain, whence is an almost imperceptible descent every way. A rivulet, called the Kennet, a tributary to the Thames, has its source a short distance from the temple. No less than six hundred and fifty blocks were brought together and placed in circles and rows. These stones were of various dimensions, measuring from ten to twenty feet in height above the ground, and from three to twelve feet in width and thickness. One hundred of those stones were raised on end, and placed in a circular form, around a flat circular area of about fourteen hundred feet in diameter ; and these stones were bounded by a deep ditch and lofty bank, which enclosed the work, except at two places, where openings were left for entrances to the temple. The bank, or mound, at present, is broken down in four places ; but there seems to have been, originally, only two openings corresponding to the great avenues."

The inner slope, according to Sir Richard Colt Hoare, "measured eighty feet, and its whole extent, or circumference, at the top was *four thousand four hundred and forty-two* : the area, within the mound, is somewhat more than twenty-eight acres. About half-way up, the inner slope was a sort of terrace walk, apparently adapted for spectators."

It appears that many of the stones had been taken away for building, &c., when Dr. Stukely examined this wonderful place. But this unwearied and learned antiquarian, and others, between what was left there undemolished, and the description given by Mr. Aubrey, seventy-six years before, have traced out the form of the whole, which is considered to be very correct, from the astonishing remains that are now left, although it is greatly demolished. According to the Rev. Mr. Cooke, who also minutely examined Abury, and the observations of Dr. Stukely, in connexion with his own, published in his "Enquiry, &c.," in 1755, it appears, that this grand temple, not only consisted of six hundred and fifty-two of these huge stones, brought together within the vast circular mound, but that they were placed artfully in very correct circles within each other; from whom we give the following table:—

				<i>No. of Stones.</i>
The great circle contained	-	-	-	100
The outer circle of the northern temple	-	-	-	30
The inner circle of ditto	-	-	-	12
The cove and altar	-	-	-	4
The outer circle of the southern temple	-	-	-	30
The inner circle of ditto	-	-	-	12
The central obelisk and altar	-	-	-	2
The ring-stone	-	-	-	1
Kennet avenue	-	-	-	200
Outer circle of Hakpen	-	-	-	40
Inner court of ditto	-	-	-	18
Bekampton avenue	-	-	-	200
Longstone cove jambs	-	-	-	2
The closing stone	-	-	-	1

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There were two avenues that led to the temple, each of them a mile long, and having a row of huge pillars on each side. "Such," observes Mr. Cooke and Dr. Stukely, "was this amazing work of Abury; than which a grander and more extensive design, scarce ever entered into the imagination of man; and which, when in perfection was, without question, the most glorious temple of the kind, which the world has ever heard of."

The space inclosed by the great earthen bank of Abury, now contains a Village, with its fields, hedge-rows, and buildings; so that it is difficult at present to make out the original design. The remains left, are continually broken and used for buildings, fences, &c.; and it is very probable, that the remainder will speedily be destroyed, and nothing left to perpetuate this once famous temple, but the history, description, &c. of it contained in books and plates.

Some contend that the temple of Avebury was raised by the Druids, who worshipped the Sun and Moon, and where public sacrifices, games, hymns, &c. were periodically performed. That it was a custom to assemble on the first day of May, and practice their national games and feats, and also to worship on this plain, is a fact that we learn from the Poem of *Aneirin*, as noticed before.

Dr. Stukely remarks, that this might have been regarded as the grand national cathedral, while the smaller circles, in different parts of the Island, might justly be compared to the parish or village churches.

Its name, as we are informed, is uncertain, and is spelt in three different ways—Avebury, Abury, and Abiry; but that the first is the most ancient of them. As to the time when this singular work was constructed, and the design of it, opinions differ considerably. The most common opinion is, that it was raised by a class of the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain, called the Druids, before the Christian era; and was a national temple in which they performed their sacred rites. Some authors are of opinion that it served the double purposes of religion and judicature. However, as to the ancient name of Avebury, Stonehenge, and also places connected with both, as well as many other places in the county, it will appear very evident that they are Gomic words, which prove that the *Cymry* were the founders of them, and that

their language was once the vernacular tongue of the aborigines.

The name of this temple may be explained in more than one way, according to the ancient British; but the best that appears to me at present is the following, which seems to agree with the names of its localities, the general opinion respecting it, and the references made to it in the Triads, as well as the ancient Poems of *Aneirin*, upon the massacre of the British chiefs, on Salisbury Plains.—*See Warrington's History.*

The word appears to be a compound of *Hav-Bre-Hu*, or *Hee*, and of the same sound as Abury when spoken short; which means the Summer Court, or Supreme Judgment-seat of *Hu*. Or, the first syllable may signify the people of *Gwlad yr Haf*, Summer Land, whence the *Cymry* came with *Hu* to the Island of *Prydain*, and who were the *Cyntae*, or first inhabitants, as I shall endeavour to prove in the “Essay upon the Origin of the *Cymry*,” which will be published as soon as a sufficient number of subscribers will be obtained.

Hu is an epithet for the Deity in the Bardic Theology, as has been observed. According to some authors, *Hu* the mighty became an object of idolatrous worship, as we shall have to notice again.

I presume also that Carnbrey, in Cornwall, signifies the *Carn* and Judgment-seat of *Hu*; where there was a great Druidical temple dedicated to *Hu*, the mighty.—*See Borlase's Antiquities.*

The names of parts connected with this temple, and places adjacent, also appear to be ancient British; such as the Hakpen, Beekampdon; the place where, probably, the agonistic game or feat of *Don* was celebrated; Overton, Roydon, Cherill, the Kennet, Silbury Hill, with another remarkable place near Stonehenge, which is said “to be an ancient ford of the river, and called Redfin.” This undoubtedly is British, and signifies the Boundary Ford, with many other similar words that may be

cited; but this will suffice to prove the language spoken by the founders of these places. The names of those places, &c. will be seen by referring to the plates, &c. in the Rev. W. Cooke's Work.

With respect to the antiquity of Abury, there is no certainty when this temple was erected; but it was evidently previous to the Roman colonization of Britain; a proof of this, and that of Silbury Hill, with some Barrows near it were raised before that period, may be seen in the fact, that the line of the great Roman road from *Aqua Solis*, or Bath, to *Lundunum*, or London, crosses the Kennet avenue that leads to the temple of Abury; and also that the said road is straight for some miles, till it comes to Silbury Hill, when it diverges to the south, and again continues in a direct line to Marlborough. In one place the road-makers cut through a large Barrow in forming their road—part of which is now standing between the avenue and Silbury Hill.

The Druidical temples were generally of a round form, as appears by the appellative terms which the Bards used in describing them, as *Cór* and *Cylch*, a round, or circle; and they were always composed of stones. Such a place is *Carnac*, in France, which is, undoubtedly, the Druidical remains of the Gaulic *Celta*, and was once a very magnificent temple. One of this description upon a small scale, is found on the top of Snowdon. There are also small ones found in other places. But there is no other equal in magnitude and grandeur to Stonehenge and Abury. From the Poems of *Aneirin*, *Taliesin*, &c. we learn that those temples were used up to the middle of the fifth century, until the time when the dreadful massacre of about 350 of the British nobles took place. But after that period, it appears that they began to fall into decay. There is no doubt but that there was a great part of those places of wood-work, which soon decayed and disappeared, so that we cannot know but little of their grandeur and magnificence. The

Poems alluded to, describe them as being very magnificent then. They also refer to the great assembly of the Saxon and British chiefs—the pompous and pagan rituals performed there for a whole week—the feast, &c. which terminated in the slaughter of the noblemen—and the burning of the temple—and destruction also of many of the Saxons by *Eidol*, &c. These accounts are corroborated by several learned historians. It is most probable that this awful event took place at Stonehenge, and not at Abury; as the great cursus, or course, is described. But as the Britons had been engaged for six or seven days previously, in the celebration of their pagan rites and ceremonies, it is probable that the solemnities performed at Abury had passed, or that they were to take place after the feast at Stonehenge; for it is evident both temples were connected with each other. From this circumstance, it appears that the Druidism of Britain received a death blow, and that the Almighty intervened and overruled the evil, for the furtherance of Christianity in the land, by removing one of the greatest obstacles to its success.

Besides the works already described, there are others of very remote antiquity in the immediate vicinity, which may be considered as connected with those temples, and are regarded as belonging to the same age and people. These are the numerous Barrows, or tumuli, which abound on the neighbouring downs, with the *Cromlech*, and the track-ways. But I shall dismiss the subject by noticing the great artificial Hill of Silbury, which is thought by some to be a Barrow.

We are told, that Silbury Hill is the largest Barrow in Europe, if not in the universe. This vast artificial conical mound of earth is situated near the temple of Abury: it stands south of the temple, exactly between the two avenues.

In Sir Richard Hoare's "Antient Wiltshire," we are furnished with the survey and calculations of

Mr. Edw. Crocker, a scientific practical surveyor. The circumference of the hill, as near the base as possible, measures two thousand and twenty-seven feet ; the diameter at top one hundred and twenty feet ; the sloping height three hundred and sixteen feet ; and the perpendicular height one hundred and seventy feet. But that part of the measurement which will excite the most surprise, is that this artificial hill covers the space of five acres, and thirty-four perches of land ! For what purposes this huge pile of earth was raised, appears to be beyond the reach of conjecture. "But I think," says Sir R. Hoare, "there can be no doubt it was one of the component parts of the grand temple of Abury, not a sepulchral mound raised over the bones and ashes of a King, or Arch-Druid. Its situation opposite to the temple, and nearly in the centre between the two avenues, seems, in some degree, to warrant this supposition." Dr. Stukely observes, "That the meridian line of the whole work passes from Silbury Hill to the centre of the temple of Abury, which has been found to be correct."

Most amazing it is, that an area of such extent should be carried up such a perpendicular height, with a sufficient base to support it ! Without actually seeing it, we can scarce have a full idea of it.

In the present name of this remarkable hill, we easily recognize the same identical language as in the other places before mentioned. Silbury means *Syll-bre-Hu*, or Syllbrehee, I presume ; meaning the Observatory of Abury—from *syll*, to gaze or observe. The summit of this hill, there is no doubt, is one of the finest situations for an observatory, and which, it is supposed, was much frequented by the ancient British stargazers, the *Saron* of antiquity, and the men of *Hu*, as we shall again notice.

This name tends to substantiate the authenticity of the British Triads, in which this hill is mentioned under the appellation of *Bryn Gwyddon*, Mount of the Philosophers.

We are told, that the three mighty labours of the Island of Britain, were lifting the stones of *Ketti*, building the work of *Emrhys*, and piling up the Mount of Assemblies. "The work of *Emrhys*," says Mr. Davies, "implies the sacred circles, such as Stonehenge, which is known by that name; the Maen Ambres, in Cornwall; *Dinas Emrhys*, in Snowdon; and other Petrai Ambrosiai. And in Silbury Hill we may contemplate the Mount of Assemblies." The work of *Emrhys*, I think, implies Abury also, and the word, probably, refers to a much remoter period than the time of Aurelius Ambrosius, and means *Ymrhys*, to contend in championship, or agonistic games; which evidently were celebrated at those places at certain seasons. The cursus, or course, near Stonehenge, was for this purpose; where the charioteers, &c. exercised and contended, and who were so expert in battle, as we learn from Cæsar, that they greatly astonished him by their manœuvres, and dreadful vehicles of war.

The Ancient Britons practised several feats in their agonistic games; the word for agonistes is *camprhyswr*; *rhyswr*, a champion. This is an old word, as we find in the following extract:—

"The mountain, on which the battle was, is called by the people of the country, *Carn* Mountain; that is to say, the mountain of tumulus; for in that place there is an immense heap of stones, under which was buried a champion, *rhyswr*, in primitive ages of antiquity."—*Buch. Griffith ab Cynan*.

There are several customs kept in Wales, at different seasons of the year, to the present day, which are considered to be Druidical remains. Such a deep root had the ancient religion of Britain taken in the minds of the nation, that some of its superstitious ceremonies and practices are not wholly extinct even in this enlightened age, which may be recognized in the old custom practised on May-day, and the credulous observance of the

flight of birds, &c. But there is one particular custom continued in the principality, an account of which is deserving of notice, for it is believed to be in commemoration of Noah's ark. For the first fortnight or three weeks of the new year, it is a practice for young men to carry about from door to door, in the dusk of the evening, a small chest, in imitation of Noah's ark, with one or more *dryws*, or wrens, in it; and at the door of every house they sing a song relative to the history of the Ancient Britons, reminding the present generation that they are descended from the patriarch, who was saved by an ark; and exhibiting the *dryw* as the symbol of the Druid, the primitive priest or minister of Noah's religion in Britain. To this Mr. James subscribes, and says that "the Bardic disciple in full costume, held in his right hand a cupful of wine and bragod, a kind of delicious mead, still made in the principality, which the Druids and Ancient Britons used on their great festivals as drink offering, &c.; in his left hand was a bird, the symbol of the aspirant, which is generally believed to have been the *dryw*, or wren; for the British word *dryw* implies both a wren and a Druid: probably because the former was fixed upon, in that age of emblems, as the symbol of an aspirant to the office of the latter." The following adage is common in Wales:—

"Y neb a dyno nyth y dryw,
Ni chaiff iechyd yn ei fyw."

He that pulls the wren's nest, shall not enjoy health while he lives.

It appears to me, that the original appellation given to this little bird was *aderyn y Dryw*, the Druid's bird, abbreviated into *Dryw*.

That this is the most ancient mode of spelling the word Druid by the *Cymry*, we learn from *Taliesin*, of the fifth century; who says, "*Wyf Syw wyf Dryw*," I am an Astrologer: I am a Druid. Probably, that the word *Dryw* means a teacher, or

priest of *Hu*, and is the same sound as given of the name by the most ancient historians.

"It will be seen hereafter," as Mr. Davies rightly observes, "that *Hu*, to whom the Bards were devoted in their hallowed wood, or groves, was the great dæmon god of the ancient British Druids."

Hu Gadarn, the mighty inspector, is a very high personage and supreme agent in the Triads. He was the god of the Druids; as such he has always been acknowledged by the *Cymry*. An old Christian Bard thus marks the religion of his votaries put in opposition to that of Christ:—

"Two active impulses truly there are in the world, and their course is manifest; an impulse from Christ: joyful is the theme. Another impulse there is, indiscreetly sung; this has been obtained by the men of *Hu*—the disorderly poets of Wales." Another says—

"Hu gadarn, por hoew geidwad,
Brenin a roe'r gwin a'r gwawd,
Emherhawdr tir a moroedd,
A bywyd oll o'r byd oedd."

In which the mighty *Hu* is called protector, king, emperor of the land and seas, and life of all the world. I shall give one specimen more—

"Bychanaf o'r bychenyd,
Yw Hu Gadarn, fe'i barn byd;
A mwyaf, a naf i ni,
Da coeliwn, a'n Duw celi;
Ysgafn ei daith, ac esgyd;
Mymryn tes gloewyn ei glud,
A mawr ar dir a moroedd,
A mwyaf a gaf ar goedd;
Mwy na'r bydoedd, 'marbedwn
Amharch gwael i'r mawr hael hwn!"

"The smallest, should he be compared with small, is the mighty *Hu*, the world doth judge; also the greatest, and lord over us, and our god of mystery. Light is his course and swift; a particle of lucid sunshine is his car; and, great on land and seas; and the greatest whom I shall manifestly find; yea greater than the worlds: let us beware of mean indignity to this greatly bounteous one."—
RHYS BRIDYDD. Translated by Dr. O. Pugh.

In the ancient records before-mentioned, the great ancestor of the *Cymry* is mentioned under different names. In connexion with the deluge, he is called *Dwyvan*; and his wife *Dwyvach*; which signifies the male and female descended from the I AM, or Self-existent. Another appellation given to the same person, is, *Nevydd Nav Neivion*, or the Heavenly One, Lord of the ocean, or deep; supposed to be Neptune, in British mythology.

“Y nofiad a wnaeth Neifion
O Droia fawr draw i Fon.”

The swimming which Neifion performed from great Troy afar to Mona.—D. AB GWILYM.

LEARNING, &c. OF THE DRUIDS.

As to the religion of the Britons, Druidism flourished among them in all its vigour, when Julius Cæsar landed in Britain, in the year 55. He informs us, that the Druids were celebrated for learning in that age; and that young men were sent over from Gaul to the Island of Britain to study under the care of the Druids. We are expressly told by the same learned author, that the system of Druidism originated in Britain; and from thence was carried over into Gaul, &c.; “And now,” he says, “those who wish to be more accurately versed in it, for the most part, go thither, *i. e.*, to Britain, in order to become acquainted with it.” He also declares, that the system existed in its greatest vigour in this Island.

The same testimony we have from Pliny, Tacitus, Pomponius Mela, Diodorus Siculus, and other learned men. Dr. Borlase says, that Divitiacus, Prince of the Aedui, a learned Druid, who possessed a large estate in Britain, was an intimate client of Pomponius, Atticus, and Cicero, and friend to Julius Cæsar. Thus it appears, that those writers had

an opportunity of gaining some knowledge of the Druids, and what they have recorded of them most probably is correct.

“The great privileges and authority of this order,” says Dr. Borlase, “made people fond of being admitted into it; and parents and guardians thought they could not do better for children of the highest rank, than send them to the Druids to be instructed.” It is supposed, that the Druids kept schools for the education of youth, and lived in societies in a conventual manner; and indeed, it is not easy to imagine how they could preserve their Arcana, give lectures in every branch of philosophy, and keep up their distinction from the vulgar, without some collegiate assemblies. Their instructions were instilled into youth in the most private manner—some sacred grove, or rocky *carn*, being the appointed place of tuition. In retirement, the scholars were gradually introduced into the several parts of learning, and the education was not completed in less than twenty years, for one who was to be initiated. No one was capable of public employments, who had not been educated under the care of a Druid.

Diodorus Siculus, speaking from Hecateus, of an Island about the extent of Sicilly, situated over against the Celtae (France), inhabited by the Hyperboreans, says, “It is fruitful, pleasant, and dedicated to Appollo, who, for the space of nineteen years, used to come and converse with them; and which is more remarkable, they could, as if they had the use of telescopes, shew the moon very near them, and discover therein mountains, &c. They had a large grove and temple, of a round form, to which the priests frequently resorted with their harps, to chaunt the praises of Appollo.”

It is asserted by several learned men, that this passage from Hecateus, refers to the Island of Britain. Dr. Borlase, Mr. Davies, Mr. Rowland, and several others, think it cannot mean any other than this; in proof of which, they have adduced several

forcible arguments in favour of this opinion. The latter gentleman infers, from a passage in the British Triads, that the Ancient Britons were possessed of an instrument similar to a telescope. However, it is very likely that the temple referred to was no other than Abury, or Stonehenge; and that the learned Abaris, who crossed over to Gaul from the opposite Island, was a British Druid. This Abaris, we are informed, was well acquainted with the celebrated philosopher, Pythagoras, who flourished about five hundred years before the Christian era; and that Pythagoras acquired much knowledge from the Druids; consequently, this proves, that they were, in that age, a very learned people.

Dr. Borlase informs us, from ancient historians, "That the Druids were a learned fraternity and priesthood of the states in which they lived; that they loved and encouraged learning, appears from their inculcating it as a most certain truth, that whosoever was skilled in divine things, (as they termed every part of their superstition and philosophy) was most agreeable to their gods, and most proper to attend their sacrifices, &c."

That they applied themselves to astronomy, geography, and physic, Cæsar and Mela assure us, "They reason much and instruct their youth in many particulars relating to the planets and their motions."

To the same facts we have Lempriere's testimony, who cites several ancient authors upon the subject, he tells us that a certain class among the Druids were called Sarronides, and that "Sarron, a king of the Celtae, was so famous for his learning, that from him philosophers were named Sarronides."

But it is very probable that those learned men had the appellation from the science of astronomy; and this account corroborates what is recorded in the British Triads of the *Seronyddion*, astronomers of the Island of Britain, who were so famous for their knowledge of the stars, that they could pre-

dict wonderful events that would take place in future times, &c.

Again, in one of the Triads it is recorded of the stones of *Gwyddon Ganhebon*, upon which were written all the arts and sciences of the world. Probably, that Sarum, in Wiltshire, had its name from those ancient British astronomers; and also a place in Carmarthenshire, called *Tremsaron*, the observatory of the Saron.

The extent and limits of the universe was another subject of their contemplation; they extended their researches into the most sublime speculations; they studied nature, and to these, we are informed, they added ethics, a future state, the immortality of the soul, and the will of the gods; they taught also that the world had a beginning, and that it would one time have an end, and that by fire.

The Druids seem to have been very studious of the virtues of plants and herbs. And either from some real or imaginary discoveries in this branch of science, according to Pliny, were led on to that extravagance, as to attribute divine power and efficacy to several vegetables, particularly the misletoe. That this plant possessed medicinal virtues, we learn from Bacon, Sir J. Colbach, and Culpepur. The learned Bacon says, "The misletoe is counted very medicinal. It is ever green and beareth a white glistening berry. And is a plant utterly differing from the plant on which it groweth." Thus we are given to understand, that they studied Botany in all its branches.

As the Druids were great admirers of the virtue of plants, in order to guard and restore health, they were sagacious enough to discover that physical remedies, of which they were not ignorant, could not be effectually applied without a thorough inspection into the several parts of the human body. Pliny calls them physicians—"Sustulit Druidas Gallorum, et hoc genus vatam, Medicorumque." *Lib. 30.*—See *Dr. Borlase's Antiq.*

They encouraged also the science of anatomy ; but they carried it on to such an excess, and so much beyond all reason and humanity, that one of them, called Herophilus, is said to have read lectures on the bodies of more than 700 living men ! to shew therein the secrets and wonders of the human fabric.—*Galtruch's Poet. Hist.*

The science of Druid physiology continued, among some families in the principality, up to the seventeenth century ; of which there are some still extant. *Meddygon Myddfai*, the physicians of *Myddfai*, were famous at one time in Wales.

Those are but a few brief remarks upon the learning, &c. of the ancient Druids, from the extensive account given by several learned men, based upon the best authority of ancient foreign writers. The same facts we learn from the ancient records of the *Cymry* ; but as the limits of this book will not admit of enlargement, I beg to refer the reader to a volume of *Triads*, translated into English by Mr. Probert, for a specimen of their ancient laws, which were composed as early as 400 hundred years before the Christian era, if not much earlier ; viz. the laws of *Dynwal Moelmud*. These prove that the Ancient Britons were excellent legislators, and not an unworthy example, in this respect, for the present generation to imitate in framing their legislative measures.

It has been inferred by some, that the Ancient Britons were an illiterate people ; but this is evidently a mistake, as it will appear upon examination that there were many learned men in Britain previous to the Roman invasion, which we learn from Julius Cæsar, Pliny, and others ; and that Britain was the chief seat of Celtic learning in that age.

It is true that Cæsar says that the Druids did not commit their mysteries to writing, for which they had certain reasons ; but it is fully as true that the emperor states that they used letters for other

purposes, and, consequently, they possessed the knowledge of letters.

That they were possessed of mechanical powers, is evident from the position of their huge and ponderous monuments that are left, which astonish the most learned of the present age in beholding them. To this, we may add their skill in Metallurgy, as the weapons of warfare, &c. prove; particularly their chariots of war and scythes attached to them. Those destructive weapons terrified even Cæsar and the warlike Romans. From the impressions upon the coins of Cunobelin, &c. we learn that they were proficient in the construction of carriages, wheels, &c. with many other things that could be mentioned if space would permit; such as music, poetry, &c.

But after all it must be allowed as equally true, that they were very superstitious, corrupt, and depraved; like other gentile nations, they practised divination, magic, augury, with all its vain ceremonies.

Dr. Borlase, from Cæsar and Mela, demonstrates their general and close analogy to the Magi of Persia, so that it almost constituted identity: they scarcely differed in their name, for Pliny calls the Druids, "The Magi of the Gauls and Britons."

I shall conclude this subject by citing the following very apposite lines from Lucan:—

"The Druids now, while arms are heard no more,
Old mysteries and barbarous rites restore;
A tribe, who singularly religion love,
And haunt the lonely coverts of the grove."

It is generally allowed, that Julius Cæsar, of all others who have written of the ancient Druids, had the best opportunity of making himself acquainted with the character and customs of Druidism; hence he is considered, of all the ancients, to be by far the best authority upon the subject. But it must be considered that he confined his observations

chiefly to the Druids of the continent, without saying but very little of the British Druids; therefore, it is inferred that he knew but very little of them, only by hearsay. But he states, that the system maintained its purity in Britain superior to that of the continent. This corroborates the fact recorded in the writings of the Ancient Britons; wherein it is said "Three nations corrupted what they had been taught of the Bardism of the Bards of the Isle of Britain, by the mixture of vain notions, and therefore, they lost it; the *Gwyddelian* Irish, the *Cymry* of *Llydaw*, Bretagne, and the Germans."—*Barddas*.

The emperor informs us also, as observed before, that the system of Druidism flourished in its greatest vigour in the Island of Britain, where also it was formed, and from thence carried over into Gaul, &c. This perfectly agrees with the Triads; where we learn that the system of Druidism originated in Britain, among the nation of the *Cymry*, and that this remarkable system was founded upon the principles, arts and sciences, which the nation retained after the dispersion, and brought with them into this Island, under the conduction of *Hu Gadarn*, the great leader of the *Cymry*, whose name became so venerated, that in process of time, after corruption had crept in, there is every probability that he was looked upon as a divine person, and adored as such, it is to be feared, as we infer from some poems that are extant.

It appears that the system was formed, and the rules and regulations of Bardism organized into an order of Druids, Bards, and Ovates, at a very early period. This we learn from the following Triads: "The three inventors of song and record of the race of the *Cymry*, *Gwyddon Ganhebon*; the first man in the world that composed vocal song—poetry.

"*Hu*, the mighty, who first adapted vocal song to the preservation of memory and record.

"And *Tydain*, the father of poetic genius, who

first conferred art on poetic song, and system on record. From what was done by these three men, originated Bards and Bardism ; and the arranging of these into a system of privilege and discipline, was afterwards performed by the three primary Bards, *Plenydd*, *Alawn*, and *Gwron*."—Triad 97.

Again we are informed in the 58th Triad, of "The three primary Bards of the Isle of Britain, *Plenydd*, *Alawn*, and *Gwron* ; that is, these formed the privileges and customs that appertain to Bards and Bardism ; and, therefore, they are called the primary Bards. Nevertheless, there were Bards and Bardism before, but they had not a licenced system ; and they had neither privileges nor customs otherwise than what they obtained through *voluntary* kindness and civility under the protection of the nation, before the time of these three."

These excellent arrangements, it is supposed, took place in the time of *Prydain*, son of *Aedd*, the great ; who flourished about 1000 years before the Christian era. This King, we are told, was "One of three national pillars of the Isle of Britain, who first organized a social state and sovereignty in Britain," by instituting wholesome laws and regulations for the preservation of order and peace. "For before that time there was no justice, but what was done by favour, nor any law except that of superior force." The 54th Triad says, that "The aforesaid King *Prydain* first organized the nation, and established a jury over the Island of Britain ;" and in consequence, that the Island had the appellation of *Ynys Prydain*, the Island of Britain.

Thus it will appear, that this is the best explanation of the origin of the present name of the Island of Britain, after all the various attempts that have been made to explain it ; and that King *Prydain* became so celebrated as a legislator and benefactor of his country, that ever since the Island has been called after his name. The *Cymry* continue to call it so to this day.

We learn also, that before this time, confusion and dissention existed between the different tribes ; which caused *Prydain*, in union with the learned of the nation, to establish a code of laws, to be the universal law of the country. Then, in all probability, the system of Druidism was established, and the Druids, or principal Bards, invested with civil power, and constituted, as the judges of the land, with an authority and jurisdiction to determine all disputes; from whose definite sentence there should be no appeal, as Mr. Davies rightly observes; and at the same time, that the Druids, Bards, and Ovates, were established by law as an order of the state. The Druids, as ministers of their religion were judges of all matters, as well as the public instructors of the nation. In corroboration of this, and of the authenticity of the Triads, we have the testimony of Cæsar, Pliny, &c., shewing the authority, &c., that the Druids possessed.

In connexion with the foregoing observations, we are also informed in the Triads, of "The three ultimate objects of Bardism—To reform morals and customs; to secure peace; and to praise all that is good and excellent." And again, "The three joys of the Bards of the Isle of Britain—The increase of knowledge; the reformation of manners; and the triumph of peace over devastation and pillage."

"The three splendid honours of the Bards of the Isle of Britain—The triumph of learning over ignorance; the triumph of reason over irrationality; and the triumph of peace over depredation and plunder."

Those Triads, it will be found, are very excellent, and contain the best of principles; to which I beg to refer the reader for a concise, curious, and interesting volume of the most ancient records of the *Cymry*. It will be observed, that the ancient Druids were all Bards. Indeed, says Mr. James, the Druids never existed in Britain but as Bards.

But, as we are informed by Dr. O. Pugh, "Each

of the orders had a peculiarity of estimation. Thus the privileged Bard was peculiarly the ruling order: the Druid, the religious functionary; and the Ovate, the literary and scientific order."

"The office of the chief Bards was to preserve the memory of the arts and sciences, and also to preserve every record and memorial of the country and tribe respecting marriages, pedigrees, arms, inheritances, and rights of the country, and nation of the *Cymry*."

When we consider the description given by Julius Cæsar, Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus, Pliny, &c., &c., so fully in accordance with the Triads, of the general character of the Druids, as being a most famous order and society of philosophers—of the purest morality—secluded from the world, as well as of the most sober habits—superior in many things to any other fraternity of the Gentile world in ancient days—it is almost incredible that they were guilty of such enormities as the very same authors ascribe to them—viz., that they offered human sacrifices; to which nearly all the most learned modern authors upon the subject subscribe. But facts are stubborn things. "*Y gwir yn erbyn y byd*." We must keep to the motto, for the force of truth is great; therefore, we must receive the accounts given by those respectable historians of the abominable rites of the Druids, as well as of the great learning they attained, the noble sciences they pursued, and the excellent moral character they deserved in other respects. If we deny the one, the other must necessarily fall; as the whole is built and based on the same authority. Consequently, the words of the Apostle, descriptive of the famous Romans of old, are equally applicable to the Druids—"Being wise, they became fools."

"The character of the Druids," says a learned author, "though debased by cruelty and superstition, was, in other respects, exemplary. In their judicial proceedings, they were just and impartial; and

their manners were amiable : they shewed eminent examples of integrity, innocence, temperance, and simplicity. They originally maintained the belief of one supreme God, to whom they gave the attributes of infinity and immensity ; but they afterwards admitted a number of inferior divinities. They taught the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and of its transmigration into other bodies, as an antidote to the fear of death. They adored their gods in prayer, in thanksgivings, in oblations, and in sacrifices of beasts. This primitive simplicity they retained, as appears from the oblations sent by their sacred ambassadors to the temple of Apollo, at least to the time of Hecateus ; when, by their frequent intercourse with the Phœnicians, they lost this simplicity, and adopted the barbarous custom of offering human victims.—*See Lyttleton and Hume's Hist. of England.*

The cruel custom of sacrificing human victims, indeed, cannot be too much condemned and detested. This abominable practice, we are told by the most respectable historians, became so general in the world at one time, that we hardly read of any nation but what has been guilty of it upon some extraordinary occasions.—*Vide Smith's Syntagma de Druid ; Chandler's Answer to Moral Philosophy ; and Rollin's Ancient History.*

The Grecians, Romans, Persians, Phœnicians, in fact, all nations, with very few exceptions, have practised this dreadful rite at one time or other. Therefore, it would be to little purpose to accumulate examples of human sacrifices. “Porphory assures us,” says Dr. Borlase, “that the book of *Sanchoniath* was full of them.” It does not appear that human sacrifices were so general in Britain as they were in Gaul, &c. ; but upon great and interesting occasions, when they implored safety from the dangers of war, or the most desperate distemper, &c., the British Druids, as well as other nations, immolated their fellow-men as victims.

We learn from Pliny, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, &c., that the Druids held several opinions which contributed to confirm them in this dreadful custom. For the redemption of the life of man, nothing but the life of man could be accepted by the gods. They held that man was the most precious, and therefore the most grateful victim which they could offer to their deities; and the more dear and beloved was the person, the more acceptable they thought the offering of him would be accounted.

But here we must remark, that several learned men suppose the British Druids did not degenerate so far as to sacrifice human victims to the gods. Dr. O. Pugh, and others, state that "the human sacrifices in Britain were criminals, to appease divine justice;" and that the custom is alluded to in the laws of *Dyvnwal Moelmud*, as cited before.

"There are three strong corrective punishments: first, the loss of life. There are three ways in which correction by loss of life may be inflicted: decapitation, hanging, and burning; and the king, or the lord of the territory, shall determine which of these shall be inflicted."—*Triad 20*.

But it will be seen, that the British Druids, in consequence of their long intercourse with the Greeks, Phœnicians, &c., who sacrificed human victims upon the altars of Saturn and Baal, or Bel, were guilty of this crime, and degenerated into a very corrupt and superstitious state. The names of churches, dedicated to *Sadwrn*, as well as the day, prove this; that human victims were sacrificed upon the altars of Saturn, and also of Baal, whom the Britons worshipped, is evident, from the altar with the inscription upon it, "*Bel, y duw cadr*," as noticed before.

Camden informs us, upon the authority of Tacitus, that among the Britons you will find the Gaulic rites and superstitions prevail. "The Gauls," says Solinus, "practice detestable rites of offering human sacrifices, not so much to the honour as to the

prejudice of religion." To this Diodorus and Cassius subscribe. Our late learned countryman, the Rev. Mr. Davies, observes, "From the language of the Triads, and some ancient poems, there is reason to infer that they, the Druids, carried their superstition still further: that during the Roman government, there was a seminary of Druids somewhere in the North of Britain, where the doctrine and discipline of heathenism were cultivated without control; that these Druids persisted in sacrificing even human victims; that certain devotees, from the southern provinces, repaired to their solemn festivals; that upon the departure of the Romans, some abominable rites were brought back from the North into Mona, and into other parts of Wales; and that the Northern seminary was not finally suppressed till the close of the sixth century."

Mr. Davies grounds his opinion, as he tells us, "upon the history of *Coll*, the great mystagogue, who presented *Brynach* with an eaglet, which became very famous."

"And the *two duskey birds of Gwenddoleu* which guarded his treasure, wearing a yoke of gold: and which were in the daily habit of *consuming two persons for their dinner, and the like number for their supper, &c.*"—*Welsh Archaiol.*

"Such is the language of the Triads; and if this does not imply the sacrificing of human victims to some divinity, who acknowledged those birds for his symbols, or his attributes, I know not what to make of it."—*See Mythol. of the British Druids.*

In another passage of the same work, we find that these birds, which consumed their human victims, were destroyed by the power of a prince, who had imbibed learning, or embraced Christianity. We may form an idea, from this, of what is meant by the celebrated battle of *Aderydd ag Eryddon*, in which *Gwenddoleu*, who was at the head of the Druidical superstition, was slain; and in which the *Imbiber of Learning* destroyed the mystical birds

that consumed the human victims. It is supposed that this battle was decided, not by the sword, but by edicts; by the oratory of Christian ministers; and the zeal of reformers, manifested in the demolition of idols and heathen temples.

In addition to what has been advanced upon this subject, it may reasonably be inferred, from certain remains that are extant, that the sanguinary custom of sacrificing human victims was, at one time, practised in Britain, whatever may be said to the contrary. As an evidence that tends to corroborate the testimony of Cæsar, Pliny, &c., "That human victims were sacrificed upon the Druidical altars," there is now a huge *Cromlech* on the top of Carn-brey, in Cornwall, which, though a solid rock, speaks volumes in favour of the above opinion. The said *Cromlech* may be from 20 to 30 tons weight, lying upon large blocks of stone similar to those described before, in the middle of a large green, surrounded by immense *Carns* of huge stones; the ruins, probably, of the large Druidical temple that was there in olden times, and where there was, according to Dr. Borlase, an extensive grove of oaks.

Having ascended the altar, the first object that attracted my attention, was a large bowl cut in the stone, and a groove or gutter leading from it to the lower edge of the altar. On each side of the main groove, there are several cavities, like troughs, cut in the stone, as if intended, by their size and form, to hold human bodies. The largest of them is about six feet in length, and about three feet broad, near the top, but narrower at the foot; each of them being of the same form, with grooves from each communicating with the main groove, ending in one, at the lower edge of the altar. They appeared to me, as if intended, by their form, for the head, shoulders, and feet of the victims; and the bowl for another purpose. If they were not intended as such, I must allow that I cannot form an idea for what else they were designed. This

corresponds with the awful description given by Pliny, &c., of the manner in which the victims were sacrificed.

Near the said *Cromlech*, upon the precipice of a rock, stands a small building, called Castle Druid: at a short distance below the hill is the town of Redruth, anciently written *Dredruith*, or Druids'-Town, according to Borlase and Polwhele; and a few miles off stands the town of Hayle, the place of the sun, I presume, probably from its having been dedicated to that luminary.

Another old custom, and the remains of heathenism, we recognize in the *Beltán*, that is not yet extinct in several parts of the British Isles; which is, undoubtedly, derived from the Phœnician god, Baal, or Bel. Calmet, Moore, and other learned authors, maintain that Bel represented the sun, and that the word is used, in a generical sense, for the superior god of the Phœnicians, Chaldeans, Moabites, and other people: it is often compounded with the name of some other god; as Baal-Peor, Baal-Berith, &c. Baal is the most ancient pagan god of the Canaanites, and, perhaps, of the East. The Hebrews too often imitated the idolatry of the Canaanites in adoring him; they offered human sacrifices to him. Jeremiah reproaches them with "building the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal," chap. ix. and chap. vii. These expressions appear to be decisive, for the actual slaying of the unhappy victims by fire. Some learned men state, that the Baal of Phœnicia was the Saturn of Greece and Rome; and certainly there was great conformity between their services and sacrifices.

That the worship of the sun formed part of the pagan system which St. Patrick found in Ireland, appears from the following passage of his confession: "That sun whom we behold, rises daily at the command of God, for our use; yet, will he never reign, nor shall his splendour endure; and all

those who adore him will descend wretchedly into punishment; but we believe and adore the true Sun, Christ."

Human victims were offered to Baal, as they were to the sun. The Persian Mithra, who is also the sun, was honoured with human sacrifices, as was Apollo.—*See Servius on the first book of Æneid; Philo. Bibli.; Bochart Geog. Sac.*—Herodius says, that some call the same deity Apollo, which others call Belin, or Bel. This latter was his name in Britain also, as it appears in an ancient prayer that is preserved, supposed, by Mr. Davies, Dr. O. Pugh, and others, to have been used by the Druids, when they offered their sacrifices.

The worship of Bel, Belin, Belus, it is allowed, was, at one time, general throughout the British Isles; and certain of its rites are still maintained among us, notwithstanding the spread and establishment of Christianity during so many ages. It might have been thought, that the pompous rituals of Popery, would have superseded the Druidical superstitions; or that the reformation to Protestantism would have banished them; or that the prevalence of various sects would have reduced them to oblivion; but the fact is otherwise.

There is a town in Perthshire called *Tylae Beltán*, *i. e.*, the eminence of Bel's fire. In the neighbourhood is a Druidical temple, where it is supposed the fire was kindled. On *Beltán* morning superstitious people go to a well near by, and drink of it; they then make a procession round it nine times, and also round the altar. "So deep rooted is this heathenish superstition in the minds of many who reckon themselves good protestants," says a late writer, "that they will not neglect these rites, even when *Beltán* falls on the sabbath.—*Statistical Account of Scotland.*

Again we are told that on the first day of May, which is called *Beltán*, or Beltein day, in Scotland, all the boys in a parish meet on the moors; they cut

a table in the green sod, of a round figure, &c.; they knead a cake of oatmeal, which is baked upon a stone on the fire, which they kindle for the ceremony; they divide the cake according to the number of the company, but they blacken one piece all over. The whole of those bits are then put into a bonnet. Every one blindfolded, draws out a bit of the cake. He who holds the bonnet is entitled to the last bit; and whoever draws the black bit of cake, is the devoted victim to be sacrificed to Bel.

There is little doubt of these human sacrifices having been once offered in this country, as well as in the East, &c.; although they now pass from the act of sacrificing, and only compel the devoted person to leap three times through the flames.—*See Mr. Pennant's Tour in Scotland.*—"Remains of the same superstitions are to be found in Ireland, England, Germany, in fact, we see that it pervaded all Europe, &c."—*Calmet, Dr. Macpherson, Dr. Keating.*

Toland, Keysler, and others inform us, that "two fires were kindled near one another, on May-eve, in every village of the nation; through Gaul, Britain, Ireland, &c. One fire was on the *Carn*, and the other on the ground; the men and beasts to be sacrificed, were to be passed through these fires."

The following, from an old poem, *Gorchan Cyn-felin*, is a striking corroboration of the foregoing:—

"Mab Coelcerth, fy ngwerth a wnaethant
O aur pwr, a dur, ac ariant."

"When I was devoted to the sacrificial flames, they ransomed me with gold, iron, and steel."—POPULAR ANTIQUITIES OF WALES.

Notwithstanding, therefore, all that has been said upon the subject, I have no doubt but that it will be said by many again, "That it is impossible that such famous learned men, as the ancient British Druids were, could have been guilty of such abominable practices."

To such persons, I would ask, is it possible that the highly privileged Jews of old, were guilty of

such enormities? and that such cruel rites are practised in India and other parts of the world, even in the nineteenth century? I answer, Yes! equally as possible as that hundreds of Christians were tortured, flayed, and burnt alive, for their conscientious scruples in religious matters; and that in Christian countries, by men who enjoyed gospel light; yes! nominal Christians, and priests of that blessed and holy religion of Christ!

And what were those, but innocent victims, that were butchered and sacrificed upon the altars of bigotry and superstition, which far surpassed, even Paganism, in cruelty and abominations. Yes! these are awful facts that cannot be denied, and prove how far deluded men may go, committing diabolical crimes, in the eye of light, and the blaze of day!

Here we see the necessity of divine revelation, and of our adherence to the commands of Jehovah, and not following our own vain imaginations and inventions in religious matters; for God never commanded such horrid rites to be practised. "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart," saith the Lord. Jer. vii. 31.

THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN.

At what time the Christian Religion was first introduced into Britain, is a question on which our ecclesiastical historians have been divided. Most of them, however, seem to agree in fixing that important event before the expiration of the first century; and the testimony of several of the ancients has been produced in support of this opinion.

According to the account that we have recorded

in the Triads, Christianity was introduced into this Island, about the latter part of the first century, through the instrumentality of *Bran ab Llyr*, father of the renowned *Caradawg*, or *Caractacus*, chief of the Silurians, and, at one time, sovereign of the Britons, and famous for his noble and heroic oration before the Roman tribunal. Both Tertullian and Origen speak of Christianity as having made its way into Britain; nor do they represent it as a recent event, so that it may be presumed to have taken place long before their time. The former says, "There are places among the Britons which were inaccessible to the Romans, but yet are subdued by Christ." The latter says, "The power of God our Saviour is even with them in Britain."

Eusebius is more explicit: speaking of the pious labours of the Apostles, he declares, that some of them had passed over the ocean and preached to the inhabitants of Britain. From his connexion with the imperial court, and his intimacy with the emperor, who was a native of Britain, he may be supposed to have possessed the best information; and as much of his reasoning depends on the truth of the above allegation, it is natural to conclude, that he was well assured of the fact. Theodoret also, another ancient and respectable ecclesiastical historian, expressly names the Britons among the nations, which the Apostles had persuaded to embrace the religion of Jesus Christ. To these testimonies may be added that of Gildas, the earliest of our British historians.

According to his account, the Gospel began to be published here about the time of the memorable revolt and overthrow of the Britons under Boadicea, A. D. 60 or 61, and was followed by a long interval of peace. Speaking of this revolt with its disastrous termination and consequences, Gildas adds, "In the mean time Christ, the true Sun, afforded his rays; that is, the knowledge of his precepts to this Island, benumbed with extreme cold, having been at a

great distance from the Sun, (not the sun in the firmament,) but the eternal Sun in heaven."

The statement of Gildas appears correct, and is remarkably supported by the Triads of the Isle of Britain. These ancient documents, which are of undoubted credit, though but little known till lately, state that the famous *Caractacus*, after a war of nine years in defence of the liberties of his country, was basely betrayed and delivered up to the Romans, by *Aregwedd Foeddig*, the Cartismandua of Roman authors; and was, together with his father and the whole family, carried captive to Rome, about the year 52, or 53; where they were detained seven years, or more.

The behaviour of *Caradawg*, in this metropolis of the world, was truly great. When brought before the emperor, he appeared with a noble and composed countenance; and, according to Tacitus, addressed himself to Claudius, in the following harangue:—

"If in my prosperity the moderation of my conduct had been equivalent to my birth and fortune, I should have come into this city, not a captive, but as a friend: nor would you have disdained the alliance of a man born of illustrious ancestors, and ruler over several nations. My present fate is to me dishonourable—to you, magnificently glorious. I once had horses; I once had men; I once had arms; I once had riches: can you wonder that I should part with them unwillingly? Although, as Romans, you aim at universal empire, it does not follow that all mankind must tamely submit to be your slaves. If I had yielded without resistance, neither the perverseness of my fortune, nor the glory of your triumph, had been so remarkable. Punish me with death; and I shall soon be forgotten! Suffer me to live; and I shall remain an everlasting monument of your clemency."

The manner in which this noble speech was delivered, affected the whole audience, and made such an impression on the emperor, that he ordered the chains of *Caradawg*, and his family, to be taken off. And the empress Agrippina, not only received the captive Britons with great kindness and compassion, but confirmed to them the enjoyment of their liberty.

At this time the Gospel was preached at Rome, and *Bran*, with others of the family, became converts to Christianity. After about seven years, they had permission to return, and were the means of introducing the knowledge of Christ among their countrymen; on which account *Bran* was long distinguished as one of "the three blessed sovereigns;" and his family "as one of the holy lineages of Britain."

At the return of these earliest British converts, it might be expected that some of the Christians, with whom they had associated at Rome, would be prevailed on to accompany them to their native country. Several of the disciples of Christ, whose names are recorded in the New Testament, were, probably, at Rome when the Britons quitted that city, but it does not appear that any of them did at this time visit Britain. We find, however, that certain Christians from Rome, did actually accompany the liberated captives, and the names of three have been preserved; viz., *Ilid*, *Cyndaw*, and *Arwystli Hen*. The first is said to have been an Israelite; they are supposed to have been all preachers, instrumental, the former especially, in turning great numbers of the Britons from the error of their ways, and persuading them to believe in Christ. Their names are the more remarkable, as they were, if not the first, yet, doubtless, among the first, Christian preachers that visited this Island.

As *Bran* and *Caradawg* were Gomerick Princes, we may safely conclude that Christianity made its way into Wales as early as into any part of this kingdom. According to the Triads, the City of Llandaf, in the County of Glamorgan, was the place to which Christianity was first introduced.

When *Bran* returned to his native land, some of his family, it is thought, staid behind, and settled at Rome. Of these, Claudia, mentioned with Pudens and Linus, in 2 Tim. iv. 21., is deemed to have been one, and supposed to be the same with

Claudia, the wife of Pudens, mentioned by Martial, the poet; who speaks of her as a British lady of extraordinary virtue, wit, and beauty. Some have thought her to be the daughter of *Caradawg*: Mr. Taylor has rendered this highly probable. It is thought that *Arwystli*, is the same person as Aristobulus, mentioned by the apostle Paul, in Rom. xvi. 10.

Many of the best writers assert that Paul, the Apostle, visited Britain. "That St. Paul did go to Britain, we may collect from the testimony of Clemens Romanus, Theodoret, and Jerome; who relate that after his imprisonment, he preached the Gospel in the Western parts; that he brought salvation to the Islands that lie in the ocean; and went to the utmost bounds of the West." What was meant by "The West, and the Islands that lie in the ocean," we may judge from Plutarch, Eusebius, and Nicephorus; who call the British ocean the Western. Again, Nicephorus says, "That one of the apostles went to the extreme countries of the ocean, and to the British Isles."—*See Burgess' Epochs of the Ancient British Church.*

It further appears, upon good authority, that the Greeks say of Aristobulus, "This preacher was sent into Britain, where he laboured much, made many converts, and at last died." This corroborates the account given in the Triads of *Arwystli Hen*, supposed to be the same person, who came with the Britons from Rome.

"In Wales," observes a learned writer, "where, amid the recesses and retreats furnished by the mountains, there were, no doubt, many who had fled after the capture of *Caractacus*, and who there continued to resist the Romans." In fact, Ostorius, who had taken *Caractacus* captive, sunk under the fatigue of the succeeding war. Manlius Valens, with a legion of Romans, was attacked and defeated by the Britons, and the war continued with various successes. Even Nero, says Suetonius, entertained

thoughts of withdrawing his army from Britain. Petronius Turpillanus succeeded to the government of Britain; who, says Tacitus, "gave the name of peace to his own inactivity." It is very probable that this peace was to be attributed to the return of the principal royal Britons to their homes, and the power of the Gospel, which they had embraced.

The Gospel flourished greatly in the first century, and spread abroad through the surrounding neighbourhood of Llandaf. Thus we see how the mighty river of God began to flow, and shook the very foundations of the Druidical fabric, which soon began to give way, and the temple of Christianity appeared to be gradually rising up in our land.

In the second century, *Lles ab Coel*, or Lucius, King of Britain, believed and was baptized: *the first king that was baptized in all the world!* who, after he became a Christian, sent to Rome for more preachers; and many of the noblemen, as well as the people generally, followed the good example of their King. Afterwards he consecrated all the Druidical temples throughout the empire, to the service of Christianity.—*See Speed.*

This King also endowed Llandaf, and made it the first Archbishoprick; and gave lands and privileges to those who first embraced the Christian faith.—*See Triad 62.*

Although King Lucius, and other great men, espoused Christianity, it cannot be inferred that the old system of Druidism fell and became extinct immediately. It continued in a dwindling state for ages after; similar to Popery in later times. It is evident that there was great respect shewn to the Druidical system, and that there were many corrupt and superstitious ceremonies practised in the fifth and sixth centuries; which we find recorded of *Myrddyn*, or Merlin, King Arthur, &c.

We learn, from the writings of *Griffith ab Arthur*, an early writer, that King Arthur, &c. enquired of

the magicians, diviners, and sorcerers, upon the subject of war; and of the false deities by sacrifices. He says thus—"And when they were returning after sacrificing unto the gods, &c."

This king, it is thought, sacrificed on *Cefn Bryn*, in Gower, which accounts for the *Cromlech* that is there being called "King Arthur's Stone." King Arthur, it appears, was the last king who patronized Druidism as a religious system; which, I think, must have taken place in the early part of his reign; for we are given to understand, that he patronized Christianity, and established three Archbishopricks in the following places:—*Caerllion-upon-Usk*; *Gelliwig*, in Cornwall; *Penrhyn Rhionydd*, in the North. The 64th Triad runs thus:—

"The three tribes of the throne of the Isle of Britain: Arthur, the supreme king in *Caerllion-upon-Usk*, and *Dewi*, the primate bishop, and *Maelgwyn Gwynedd*, the first elder; Arthur, the supreme king at *Gelliwig*, in Cornwall, and *Bedwini*, the primate bishop, and *Carndoc Freichfras*, the first elder; Arthur, the supreme king at *Penrhyn Rhionydd*, in the North, and *Cyndeyrn Garthwys*, the primate bishop, and *Gwrthmwl Wledig*, the first elder."

In concluding this subject, we cannot but wonder at and admire the inscrutable ways of Providence, who overruled the captivity of the royal Britons towards the introduction of Christianity into Britain. Thus we see, that Druidism fell, and Britain became exalted among the nations. But what has made her great among the nations, and the heart of the moral world?—CHRISTIANITY!

Let us appreciate the glorious Gospel of grace, and the infallible word of God. It is the Gospel that has chased away the horrid scenes of heathen worship out of many nations: wherever the Bible is gone, a moral change has taken place. What it has effected in Britain and other nations, it is now effecting in India and Africa; pulling down

the strong holds of Satan—dispersing the gloomy shades of heathenism—emancipating man from the thralldom of sin and superstition—and restoring unto him the peace of conscience, and the favour of God. Yes! what the profound philosophy of ancient Greece and the learning and power of Rome, once the mistress of the world, could not do, has been achieved by the power of divine truth.

This divine system, excels Druidism, and all other religious systems, infinitely greater than the refulgent light of the sun excels the gloomy light of an expiring taper.

Though infidels may scoff at this, yet, it must be allowed that Christianity has wrought wonders in the world. The Gospel is the mighty engine by which Jehovah destroys the refuges of lies—demolishes the idol temples—despoils the hoards of vice—and throws down every barrier erected by Satan to intercept the flight of sinners to the cross of Christ. Happily for us, the effects of Christianity, not merely on the world at large, but on the hearts and lives of those who are brought to a saving acquaintance with its gracious realities—to live on its bounties—to lean on its moveless base—to triumph in its distinguishing doctrines—and to obey its holy precepts—are among those evidences of its authenticity, which, like the splendour of the torrid mid-day sun, are too bright and too clear for infidelity to dispute, and too convincing for depravity to reject.

May Christianity speedily become the governing principle in every heart—the light of all the nations of the world—and the infallible rule of conduct to all the inhabitants of the earth. Then shall the saying be fulfilled, “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”

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